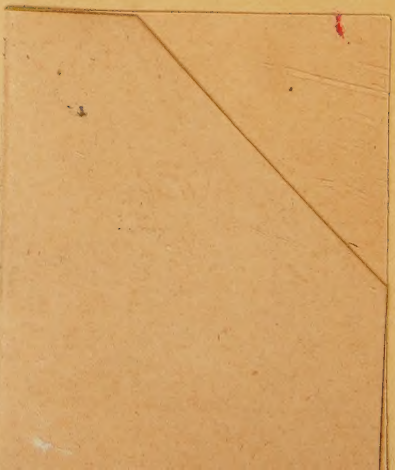

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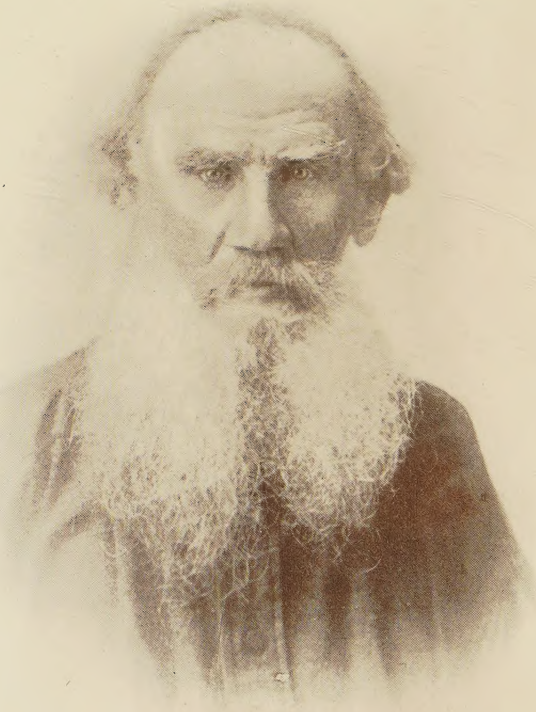

Leo Tolstoy

From an original photograph in private ownership

STORIES & DRAMAS

BY

LEO N. TOLSTOY

Translated from the Russian by

Mrs. Lydia Turin, Mrs. H. M. Lucas
and C. J. Hogarth

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NOTE

Edited by Messrs. S. P. Melgounov, T. I. Polner, and A. M. Chiviakov, the original edition from which this book has been translated was published in 1926 by Messrs. N. P. Karbasnikov of Paris from copies of Tolstoy's original manuscripts made by the Moscow "Society for Studying and Publishing the Works of L. N. Tolstoy" on behalf of the co-operative publishing house of Moscow known as "Zadruga" ("For One Another"), directed by Mr. Melgounov, and suppressed by the Soviet authorities. But for that suppression, this house had intended to celebrate the centenary of Tolstoy's birth (August 28th, 1928) by issuing, on that date, the first-published collection of his works in whole.

PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION

In this volume we offer the reader thirteen examples of Tolstoy's literary output which various causes have hitherto precluded from publication; and although the artistic merit of the items may differ considerably, all of them present interesting features of the great writer and his literary activities during practically the whole of his intellectual career. The first item, "The History of a Yesterday," was written in 1851, that is to say, before even Tolstoy's "Childhood" had appeared; and the last of them, "A Conversation on the Land," was composed in June, 1910, that is to say, only four months before its author's death. As for the remaining items, they may variously be ascribed to the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties of the past century.

The first item is "an attempt to describe the spiritual side of my life during a single day." A young man of twenty-two, without occupation or ties, is living the fashionable life in Moscow when he conceives the idea of entering upon a daily record of his every thought, act, and observation. His only fear in the matter is lest, owing to the richness of his spiritual life, the world should not, for the purpose,

contain a sufficiency of ink. The record closes with the description of the first "yesterday," but as one reads these surprising pages one realises that if the author had gone on to describe many more such, and to describe them in full, he would in very truth have required bottlefuls of ink in generous quantities! Indeed, we find the writer's opulence of intellectual activity, and subtlety, and tendency to paradoxical thought-processes, and sensibility, and receptiveness to be quite exceptional. And though the pages of the record give us none of the passionate, daring, and aggressive Tolstoy which he often was at that period, although the history of the "yesterday" contains no scenes of the sort naturally to be looked for from a Tolstoy of that nature, is there any diary, or any biography, that could better illustrate other aspects of the young man's many-sided spiritual existence, with its constant changes of mood, its endless flow of interesting ideas, its capacity to see and hear what others find invisible and inaudible, its ever-recurrent pondering upon problems of self-perfection, its kindly and delicate attitude towards serf labour, and its curious want of balance between word and act? The record sets forth its matter quite openly, without any disguise, and even its names and facts correspond with known biographical details; whilst its general tone, its brave gait, and its refined, Stendhal-like humour combine, for the rest, to render it an eloquent expression of Tolstoy's genius.

Less autobiographical than the first item, "How

Love Dies," is important for the historian of Tolstoy's literary creation in that it displays the young writer in a first attempt to "find himself," and pass from the subjective manner of "Childhood" to the objective manner of ideas. Originally thought out in Moscow in 1853, the story was committed to paper in the Caucasus at a later period, and is unique in the circumstances of its composition—it differs therein from any other work by Tolstoy, whether of its own period or of subsequent ones.

The prose poem which, editorially, we have entitled "The Quail" also seems to have originated from Tolstoy's impressions of the Caucasian campaign. Like the first two items, it may be ascribed to the early fifties.

"Varenka" was written in Moscow during the October of 1857, and was composed for the benefit of Varenka, the little daughter of Tolstoy's sister, Maria Nikolaevna. Though only a charming trifle, the composition yet has its place in Tolstoyana for the reason that literature can show few better examples of insight into childish psychology.

Four variants of "The Dream" exist, and it is an item with which Tolstoy seems to have connected some valued experiences, for during the years 1857–1862 he kept returning to its elaboration, and at one time he even thought of including it in his "War and Peace." The dream related was no invented vision, but one actually beheld by the author's elder brother, Count Nikolai, and turns upon the pathos of the

inevitable clash between one inclined towards social activity, given to propaganda, and instinctively masterful and any chance of such an one's happiness in marriage with a woman neither able to nor caring to understand these things, yet dominating her household, and even adhering to her own rules of life. "The Dream" was not published during Tolstoy's lifetime, even though the Countess Sophia Andreievna once sent it (very possibly with Tolstoy's jesting acquiescence) to I. S. Aksakov's journal, under the guise of "a first literary attempt on the part of Natalia Petrovna Okhotnitsk." Of the four variants existent we print the fourth and last.

The sketch "How Russian Soldiers Die" is another war tale of Tolstoy's Caucasian period, and was written in 1858. Originally entitled "The Alarm," it is a reminiscence of military experiences.

Also to the fifties of the past century must we ascribe the sketch "The Oasis." This composition was never finished, yet deserves some consideration for its portrayal of youthful melancholy and love-hunger.

The extempore absurdity "The Nihilist" wafts to us a breath of careless, uncritical gaiety. When, in the autumn of 1863, the year following upon the Tolstoys' marriage, some young people were staying at Krasnaya Polyana, they conceived the idea of getting up some private theatricals, and Tolstoy wrote the "book," and his sister, the future nun, undertook the rôle of Thiona Andreievna (incidentally "gag-

ging" until her fellow players nearly died of laughter), and the little Sophia Andreievna figured as the forty-year-old Simeon Ivanitch, and Sophia's sister, Tatiana Andreievna Bers, played Simeon's spouse. Tolstoy himself formed one of the audience, and laughed till he nearly cried.

The item in the volume, however, which Tolstoy himself most valued is the play "The Contaminated Family." He was engaged upon it at the time of the last item, and later took the manuscript with him to Moscow, read it to a circle of literary men, and implored Ostrovsky's help towards its immediate production upon the stage of the Imperial Theatre. But the play did not find favour with the directorate, and they fell back upon the excuse that the end of the season was too near. Tolstoy insisted: In his opinion the play would lose its instancy of pungency if it was not presented at once. "Perhaps," Ostrovsky growled, "people will have grown wiser by the autumn." But when autumn came Tolstoy took no further steps in the matter.

The "Conversation in a Village" shows us what was Tolstoy's attitude towards education in the middle seventies, when "Anna Karenina" was being written whilst "Pan" and "Peter the Publican" display views and tendencies characteristic of the ninth and tenth decades.

The closing item in the volume was written only four months before the great writer's death, and treats of the inequity of Russia's then agrarian rela-

tions. As is well known, the aged Tolstoy considered those relations to be "a great sin," and more than all else to have brought about Russia's social ills. At that period the agrarian question was frequently in his thoughts and on his lips.

Thus the thirteen productions, as they pass before us, afford us thirteen expressions of the changes in Tolstoy's spiritual life—from his restless, and richly talented, and many-coloured period of youth to his dry, and didactic, and apostolic old age. And it is not only that they show us Tolstoy's several interests, and the several phases of his intellectual development: they also throw upon sundry dry biographical details a searchlight which, though but incomplete, casual, and fragmentary, is yet of the highest value.

TIKHON POLNER.

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THE STORY OF A YESTERDAY

THE STORY OF A YESTERDAY[1]

Translated by C. J. Hogarth

I WRITE this record, not because yesterday was in any way remarkable, or able to be called such, but because for a long time past I have meditated keeping a daily register of the spiritual side of my life. For how diverse and notable are the daily impressions which occur to one, even as are the thoughts aroused by those impressions—thoughts, perhaps dim and obscure to others, but perfectly intelligible to the thinker himself!

And if I should succeed in so relating those thoughts and impressions that, firstly, I myself can read them with ease, and, secondly, I can enable others to do the same, there should result a very notable and instructive manuscript. My only fear is lest the world should not contain enough ink for the writing of it, nor a sufficient number of compositors for its printing!

Yesterday morning it was late, a quarter to ten o'clock, when I arose. This was because, the night

[1] Tolstoy's first literary production. Written in Moscow during the March of 1851.

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before, I had not gone to bed until after midnight. And here let me explain that some while ago I formed a rule never to retire later than twelve. True, that rule has been broken on three occasions during the past week alone, but circumstances may differ, and in each case there were circumstances which made the breakings of the rule represent backslidings rather than sins. The circumstances, the night before last, were as follows.

In passing, let me apologise for beginning with as long as a day and a half ago, even though professional story tellers may go back for a whole generation when writing their hero's history. Well, I spent the evening in question at cards; though not, as some might suppose, because I have a passion for gambling, but because I like occasionally to amuse myself much as a man likes occasionally to dance a polka. Jean Jacques Rousseau once proposed (though no one adopted the proposal) that people's hands should be kept employed, when in company, by setting them to play at cup-and-ball. But this resource could never be enough, for in company one needs also to have one's brain occupied, and so occupied that one can either talk or remain silent at will. And cards alone represent such an occupation.

People of an older generation complain that conversation has ceased to be; but though I do not know precisely what the folk of olden days were like (I have an idea that they were much the same as now), I do know that conversation in the true sense is as

impossible as it is inept as a means of passing the time. Not because wit is always absent, but because egotism is ever present. For in conversation every man's one desire is to talk either of himself or of something which interests him: and the effect of one man speaking in this way, and of another listening, is to annihilate the affair as conversation, and to convert it into a lecture. And even when two men interested in the same subject meet, let but a third person arrive, and immediately the thing will become spoilt, in that the newcomer too will need to be given a share of the discussion, and the "conversation," as such, will go to the devil.

Of course, there may be dialogues between two men interested in the same subject into which no third person intrudes; but, even so, the case is worse than ever, for each of the two men will discuss the subject solely from his own point of view, and transfer everything to that point, and measure everything solely by that standard, and prolong the dialogue in proportion as each recedes further from the other's position, and, not converse, but lecture with an assurance intelligible to himself alone, and hold himself up as an authority to one who is not listening to him at all, but doing the same thing as he is. Have you ever rolled eggs in Easter Week? Well, you will have noticed that if you start two identical eggs along the board with their noses turned in opposite directions, they will, after proceeding in company for a short distance, diverge, each in the direction of its

own nose. It is the same in "conversation" as it is in egg-rolling. True, some very blunt-nosed eggs will roll in company for quite a distance: but never is this so with sharp-nosed eggs—always they deviate goodness knows whither at once, and cannot be made to travel in company. Each has its own nose.

Of course, I am not now speaking of dialogues of the kind which one engages in simply because it would be as rude not to do so as it would be rude to be present not wearing a collar—dialogues during which the one party reflects, "What I am talking about doesn't interest me a rap, but I must say something," and the other party reflects, "Oh, talk away, talk away, you miserable fool! I know that you have to do it."

For that is, not conversation, but, like a dress coat, or a visiting card, or a pair of gloves, a mere polite convention.

I repeat, therefore, that cards are an excellent social device, in that, whilst playing them, one need not talk at all, or if one desires to please one's vanity by making an occasional remark, one still need not prolong that remark to the point necessary in company which is carrying on conversation pure and simple. By the way, in company like that it is always best to keep a few intellectual cartridges to the last, to the moment when one is actually reaching for one's hat, and then discharge them with a rush like a horse spurting to win a race, rather than end up in a purely spent and exhausted condition. Yes, I have seen many people—not clever people, but at least

people qualified to shine in society—come to grief, and lose their social chances, solely through an inability to shade themselves off. For if one, from the first, talks earnestly, one is bound to end up, not only by wearying others, but also by wearying oneself, ceasing to return replies, and leaving people saying, when one has gone, "*What* a bore so-and-so is!"

But when card play is afoot there is none of this! At such times one can remain silent, and yet commit no sin.

Besides, if young women are playing with you, what better than to spend two or three hours in their company? Or if only *one* such be playing, it ought to be enough for you, and more than enough.

So, as I say, I spent the evening at cards. I sat to the right of a certain woman, and to her left, and to her front, and admired her from every point of view. And the result was that the sport lasted until a quarter to twelve, and, in all, we played three rubbers. But why did she take such a pleasure in making me conspicuous? Was I not uncomfortable enough already with the idea that I had got dirty hands, and that my attitude was awkward, and that the side of my neck next to her was itching with a newly gathered pimple?

Yet no; it was not she that was to blame: what was to blame was the fact that always I feel awkward in the presence of people whom I dislike, or else like excessively. Why so? For the reason that in the one case I am wanting to make a display of my dis-

like, and, in the other, I am wanting to make a display of my liking, but finding it difficult to do so. In either case the result issues contrary to what I had intended. If I try to seem cold I overdo it; and am set down as effusive; whilst in the presence of people whom I like I at once become seized with the idea that my friendliness is being attributed to base motives, and grow dry and sarcastic accordingly.

The reason why I like that woman is that she has in her qualities which themselves compel a liking, or, rather, which compel me to like her solely for her own sake, and not just because she is the property of a husband. To which latter fact I never give so much as a thought. And though she has an ugly habit of billing and cooing with her husband in public, even that is no affair of mine, and it would be all one to me if she were to start kissing a stove or a table in public, so well do I know that she is but playing with the relations supposed to exist in such cases.

Yet she is a coquette. No: she is not a coquette. Merely she likes to please, and turn heads. The reason why I do not call her a coquette is that neither the term itself nor the idea bound up with it is nice. Mere display of the figure, mere allurement through desire, is not coquetry, but solely viciousness and immodesty; whereas *her* coquetry comes of her charm, of her indefinable quality of liking to please, and turn heads. In any case, "incidents with ladies" hurt no one (for Werthers have ceased to exist), and afford both the lady and others much innocent pleasure. I

myself, when I have admired a woman, am content with that, and desire no more. But there may be coquetry of the half-calculated, half-clumsy kind—calculated because it is furtive and shuns detection, and clumsy because it is but imperfectly hidden, and keeps saying, "I may not be attractive, but do look at my ankles as I step into my carriage! Are they not nice?" True, one can reply tacitly, "Yes, I know that they are nice, but since you display them on purpose, I do not intend to look at them"; but to that the calculated coquetry will retort, "What do I care? See, again, how I have taken off my hat. I have taken it off because I am hot. What does your opinion matter?"

The woman of whom I am speaking is a mixture of calculation and innocence.

I glanced at my watch, and sprang to my feet. Curiously enough, though she never looks at me except when I am speaking to her, she yet perceives my every movement. "See his pink watch!" Instantly, somehow, on hearing that she conceived my watch to be pink, I became abashed, and not the less so because when I remarked that the watch was a very good one I saw that she too was feeling confused through having made me feel so, and that therefore our embarrassment was mutual. Then both of us grasped the absurdity of the situation, and laughed. And somehow both the being confused together and the laughing together seemed to me equally enjoyable. True, they were trivialities, both of them; but they

were trivialities in common. And in any case I love tacit relations of the sort expressed with the eyes and almost imperceptible smiles, and not capable of being put into words. They come less of an actual understanding than of a realisation that the other is believing such an understanding to exist, and—well, and so forth, and so forth. However, the next moment, either because she wished to end the incident which I found so delightful, or because she wished to know for certain whether I was going to depart, or because merely she wished to resume the card game, she glanced at her marker, fell to tracing a figure upon the tablecloth, a figure proper neither to mathematics nor to art, looked at her husband for a moment, and then shifted her gaze to a point midway between him and myself with the suggestion, "Shall we make up the game to three rubbers?"

I was so lost in contemplating less her individual movements than the whole of her charm, that indefinable quality, that at first I could not clothe my words in polite language, but said merely, "No, I cannot stay." And even as I spoke I, or, rather, a part of my "I," regretted the speech. For that matter, there is not an act, however slight, that one can perform without at least a portion of oneself disapproving of one's conduct, even though another portion may say, "What if you do go to bed after midnight? How do you know that you will ever again be able to spend such an enjoyable evening?" Well, that night this portion of me must have bespoken me

well and fairly, for I began to turn nervous, and to seek arguments for that portion's withstanding, and to say to myself, "In the first place, you are *not* enjoying yourself, for you don't really care for that woman; and in the second place, you are feeling embarrassed; and in the third place, you have told yourself that you ought not to stop any longer, and therefore you must not fall in your own opinion."

"Comme il est aimable, ce jeune homme!"

The remark, breaking in upon my reflections, interrupted my train of thought, and made me more than ever regret that I could not remain. However, since regret is not a mental operation that calls for a thought process to itself, I meanwhile continued with another one.

"How I love to hear her speak of me in the third person! True, Germans think it rude to speak like that, but *I* should love her doing so even in German. Also, I wonder if she has got a nickname for me, for she always seems to hesitate to address me by my name in full? Can it be that I, that I——?"

"At least stop and have some supper," her husband put in.

I was feeling too preoccupied with formularies of the third person to do more than make some more polite excuses for being unable to remain—then, as regards my corporeal portion, relinquish my hat, and resume my seat. None the less, my mental portion was guiltless of the inconsistency, for I was exceedingly vexed, and began to take myself to task again

until an interesting incident distracted me. This was that again she had fallen to tracing something indistinguishable upon the tablecloth. Then, the figure traced, she raised her pencil, laid it upon the table, rested her hands upon the settee to either side of her, and, rocking herself gently to and fro, leant back with her face in full relief, so that I could contemplate its delicate, rounded contours, its dark, half-closed, energetic eyes, its slender, pointed nose, and the mouth that was always one with the eyes, yet always expressing something different. What was its expression now? In it there were pensiveness, humour, weariness, an endeavour not to laugh, gravity, petulance, reflection, distraction, interestedness, excitement, apathy—and goodness knows what else!

Her husband left the room—probably to order supper.

Whenever I find myself alone with her I grow dull and nervous. Even before the third, or other, persons have left the room there comes over me the same misgiving that seizes me in the fifth figure of a quadrille when my partner crosses over to our *vis-à-vis,* and I realize that I am stranded. Napoleon himself cannot have felt more uneasy when the Saxons deserted him at Waterloo than I at once become during that trying figure. However, during that figure I have a resource, and I resorted to it now. That is to say, I pretended not to observe that we were alone —I just repeated my last words, added an "Of

course," and left her to cap it with a "Yes." Then there formed itself between us, and passed between us, the following unspoken dialogue:

She: "I know why you repeated your words just now. You did so because you were feeling awkward at being left alone with me, and were thinking that I was the same, and spoke so as to make both of us seem occupied. Well, for that consideration I thank you, though I think that you might at least have said something more intelligent."

I: "You have guessed aright, though I do not see why *you* should be feeling awkward. Surely you do not suppose that, because I have been left alone with you, I shall say things which you would rather not hear? Well, to show how ready I am to sacrifice my desire for silence (and also how I wish to end this distasteful unspoken dialogue), I will say something aloud. Or will *you* begin?"

She: "No. Do you."

I had just opened my mouth to say one of those things which one can say with one's thoughts upon something else when she of her own accord started a subject which, but for a continuance of the unspoken dialogue, might have lasted out the time. But, as pitted against that dialogue, any subject was bound to falter, and, after a sentence or two on either side, silence returned. Then a fresh attempt was made, but silence once more resumed its sway, and left the field to the unspoken dialogue.

I: "Protest from you is useless. I can see clearly

that you are embarrassed. How thankful I shall be when your husband returns!"

She (to a servant entering): "Where is Ivan Ivanovitch? Tell him I want him."

Perhaps you suppose such mute dialogues never to be held? Well, that they are so held you will see from the continuance of my unvoiced remarks.

I: "Nevertheless, I do not regret that we have had this time together. Also, let me say that my embarrassment has come solely of your own, for even when my foot has blundered against yours to-night you have always hastened to beg my pardon before I could realise the foot to be yours, and be the first to apologise. Each time I have had to leave you thinking that my clumsiness had been intentional."

At this point her husband did return, and we resumed our card play, and then had supper, and talked. When I reached home the time was half-past twelve.

That evening (which was March 25th) was clear and still. Over the red, snow-patched roof of my host's white house a young moon had just come into view.

"Draw up, Mr. N.'s sleigh!" Yet the order need not have been given, for my sleigh was the only one waiting, and Dmitri must have known that I was coming out. In fact, even as I approached the door I could hear his chirrup—a sound which might have led one to suppose that he was kissing someone under

cover of the darkness, but meant, in reality, that he was urging his steed to draw the sleigh clear of the kerbstone, against which its runners were making an ugly grating and squeaking.

Then, the sleigh brought into position, a deferential footman took me under the elbow, and I entered. Had the deferential footman not taken me under the elbow I should have done the business in one hop: but, as it was, I hesitated to offend him, and moved sedately—thereby breaking the ice on a pool, and getting one of my feet wet.

"Thank you, my good fellow!—Dmitri, is it freezing?"

"A little, sir. There are always rimes at this season of the year."

What a stupid question to have asked him! Yet not altogether so, for all of us, at times, when feeling cheerful, like to say something that will bring us into relations with our fellows. But why was I feeling cheerful? If I had been getting into the sleigh half an hour earlier I should have said not a word. Simply because I had been talking well just before leaving, and been escorted to the door by the host, and asked, "When shall we see you again?" and had the gratification (despite the man's smell of garlic) of seeing a footman spring to attention at the sight of me, and render me obsequious service. His reward was a poltinnik,[1] or something of the sort. As a rule our recollections of given occasions tend to

[1] Half a rouble.

have their middle drop out of them, and only the first and the last impressions in them remain: and this is why it is always well that a host should escort his guest to the door on leaving, since, on arriving there, the host (usually with feet crossed akimbo) is bound, whether or not he likes the guest, to give him a civil parting word or two. The words "When shall we see you again?" may mean nothing in themselves, but at least they leave the guest's self-esteem free to translate the "when" into "as soon as possible," and the "we" into "myself and my wife, who is as anxious to meet you again as I am," and the "again" into "We have spent a whole evening in your company, yet not been bored with you." All of which produces upon the guest a pleasant concluding impression.

Also, it is a good, and even an indispensable, thing to tip the servants of houses visited, and especially servants in houses where, owing to faulty training, the staff, and especially the porter, who is one's first and last impression of a house, would not otherwise be particularly civil. From that time onwards the stag will welcome you, and attend you, as a good friend of the house, and, even though their ministrations are based upon poltinniki, will leave you in a position to translate those ministrations into "Everyone here likes and respects you. Be sure that whenever we are receiving company we will take especial pains to make you comfortable." And the liking and the respect even of dependents are agreeable. True, occasionally a

mistake may be made; yet, even so, what matter? Were a mistake never made, never would——

"Damn the fellow and his smell of garlic!"

Quietly and unostentatiously Dmitri and I were proceeding along our proper, the right-hand, side of the frosty street when all of a sudden we were dashed into by a driver in a four-horsed sleigh whom Dmitri presently addressed as "you devil." Yet it was not until Dmitri had drawn clear, and proceeded quite ten yards further, that he, Dmitri, found voice enough to shout, "Hi, you devil! Don't you know your right hand from your left?" Not that the reader must suppose Dmitri to be timid, or, on ordinary occasions, unready with his tongue. Dmitri may be small of stature, and hairless (save for a moustache) of face, but, with that, his sense of his dignity is profound, and his observance of correct procedure exact. On the present occasion, however, there were two good reasons why at first he failed to meet the crisis: and those reasons were, firstly, that whereas he is accustomed to drive conveyances which instinctively inspire respect, he and I were, at the moment, journeying in a vehicle so long in the shafts that the whip could scarcely reach the diminutive steed, and that steed was wobbly of hind leg, and altogether a creature calculated to move the casual observer to ridicule rather than to respect—a feature bound to be peculiarly galling to a driver of Dmitri's stamp, and likely to diminish his powers of self-

assertion; and secondly, that my question about the frost had reminded him of a like question the previous autumn, and revived in him (for he is a sportsman) sporting recollections, and left him destitute of the ready curse for any driver who should fail to keep to the right. For, with drivers as with the rest of mankind, only the driver issues justified who can outbawl his rival. True, there are exceptions, and Vanka, for one, is a man who cannot shout properly at a rival vehicle, whilst in any case even the smartest one-horse affair cannot effectively abuse a four-in-hand; but in the main the situation depends upon (1) the personality of one's driver, (2) the circumstances of the moment, and (3) the direction in which the two colliding vehicles subsequently proceed. At Tula I once observed a striking instance of a man's ability to dominate his fellows through impudence. It was during the annual carriage parade at Shrovetide, and four-in-hands and pair-horse sleighs and one-horse affairs were filing in lines along the Kiev road between throngs of pedestrians, when all of a sudden there came from a cross street a raucous shout of "Hi! Hold hard, you! Pull out!" and across the thoroughfare, before anyone knew what was up, there drove a battered old sleigh and a sorry steed, with the driver standing erect in the vehicle, and whirling the slack of his reins about his head. Even the constables on duty laughed.

At the same time, though Dmitri has both spirit and a gift for language, he also has a good heart,

and spares his cattle—uses the whip as a means less of stimulating those cattle (which he deems a proceeding beneath the dignity of a town coachman) than of giving them "one or two" when they decline to draw up the sleigh to the kerb. This trait in him I noticed on the present occasion, since, though the pony cut things rather fine when turning from one street into another, and I could tell from Dmitri's chirrupings, and from the restless motion of his back, that the fact irritated him, he evidently decided, each time, not to use the whip and contravene his principles. But if the pony had jibbed? Well, of course Dmitri would not have allowed anything so extreme as that, even if he had not had to fear the usual wag, and the usual question, "So you've stopped to give him a feed?" For Dmitri's guiding rule of conduct is good sense, not vanity. As I drove along, all this led me to reflect upon the general inter-relations of drivers—their wit, their pride, and their resourcefulness. What, for example, happens, I pondered, when many drivers meet together, and recognize exantagonists in collisions? Well, presumably they just exchange hostile relations for pacific. In fact, to me all things are interesting, but especially the interrelations of classes to which I myself do not happen to belong.

If, after a collision, the colliding vehicles proceed in the same direction as one another, it follows that the resultant dispute lasts longer than otherwise, and that, though the man in the wrong may seek to get

away, or to drop behind, his rival will have all the better chance of eventually showing him the error of his ways. But, other things being equal, the balance will tend towards the man who has the freshest steeds. Interesting also are the inter-relations of occupants of colliding vehicles, and with their drivers. I have noticed that when, say, "Here, you good-for-nothing lot! Where do you suppose you're coming to?" is addressed at large to a turn-out, the occupant of the turn-out does one of two things: either he assumes suddenly an air of gravity, or he assumes suddenly an air of light-hearted detachment, but that in either case the non-previously present expression fails to mask the fact that he would have been glad if things could have happened otherwise than as they have done. Particularly do bearded occupants seem to resent affronts offered to their equipages.

"Who is going to hire you there?" this morning I heard a constable shout to a cabman; and in return the cabman, a stout, lusty fellow with a red beard, proved studiously rude. It all began with his lodging his cab beside the kerb immediately in front of the constable's box. Then he tucked his reins beneath his posterior, planted his elbows upon his knees, and surrendered his back to the rays of the sun. And that the process soon proved successful was shown by the fact that presently his eyes closed. Meanwhile the constable paced the little square before his box, and from time to time, with the tip of his baton, re-arranged a piece of planking which covered a pool

there. But suddenly he seemed to take offence—either because the cab was standing where it was, or because he was envying the cabman for absorbing so much gratifying warmth. At all events, deciding to let loose his tongue, he paced his little square another time or two, then glanced down an adjacent side street, then rapped upon the piece of planking with his baton, and, lastly, shouted, "Hi, you! What are you blocking up the roadway for?"

The cabman raised his left eyelid, glanced at the constable, and re-lowered the eyelid.

"Get along with you if you don't want me to say a good deal more!"

Still no reply.

"Come! Do you hear me? Get away!"

Still no reply.

Once more the constable paced his beat; once more he glanced down the adjacent side street. But just as, evidently, he was pulling himself together for a particularly mordant remark the cabman straightened his form, re-arranged the reins beneath his posterior, turned a pair of lack-lustre eyes upon the constable, and said, "What are you shouting about? You know that they haven't trusted you with a fire-arm, yet you bawl as if they had!"

"Now, then! Be off with you!"

Then the cabman did rouse himself, and yield the point. I glanced at the constable. His eyes caught mine angrily, and he muttered something. Clearly he was disconcerted that I should have overseen and

overheard the incident. And inasmuch as I knew that nothing irritates a man worse than to be watched, and not to be able to speak about it, I too grew confused, and compassionating the constable, pursued my way.

Another trait in Dmitri that I like is his ability everywhere and always to nickname anyone. It is a trait which never fails to amuse me. "Hullo, Old Hat!" "Hullo, Soldier!" "Hullo, Long Beard!" "Hullo, Bobsleigh!" "Hullo, Scarecrow!" "Hullo, M'seer!" and the rest. Truly the Russian man of the people has a marvellous gift for divining the epithet calculated best to strike home! Besides, all classes come alike to him—the tradesman is "Cat Man" (popularly tradesmen are supposed to go in a great deal for skinning cats) quite as much as the footman is "Lakash," or "Plate Licker," or "Peasant," or "Rurik" (though why the latter I never can determine), the private coachman "Rope Chewer," and so forth. For he treats all equally disrespectfully, and takes all as they come, and in a flash can christen the veriest stranger with a sobriquet going home to the raw—with "Lame Dog," or "Boss-eyed Devil," or "Fat-lipped Rascal," or "Splay Nose," and the rest. And these objurgations need actually to be heard for one to realise their aptness. I myself shall never forget the insult when one fellow said to another behind my back, "Look at that gap-tooth!" For, sure enough, my teeth are both few and bad and decayed.

As soon as we reached home Dmitri hastened to jump from his seat, and open the large gates, before I too could jump out and reach the wicket. Always this is the procedure—I being anxious to enter without delay, for that is my custom, and he being anxious to drive me up to the porch itself, since that is *his* custom.

It was long before my ring at the bell evoked a response. Meanwhile I inferred from the fact that the candle in the hall was far burnt down that my valet, Prov, had gone to sleep. And as I rang I reflected, "Why have I such a dislike to returning to a place in which I spend so little of my life?" Probably the dislike comes of having always to see Prov in the same place, with the same tallow candle, the same surroundings, and the same hangings and pictures. It is the latter that weary me most, for, whereas they aspire to variety, one need only look at them for a couple of days for them to seem worse than a blank wall-space would have been. Yes, and probably another reason is that one was not meant to live the bachelor life at twenty-two. When at length Prov did spring to his feet, and come across the hall to open the door with a clattering designed to show that he had been awake all the time, how I wished that I could have asked him, "Has the barinya gone to bed yet?" and heard him reply, "No, sir. She is sitting up, and reading," and have gone to her, and taken her head into my hands, and held her before me, and looked at her, and kissed her, and looked at

her again, and kissed her again! Ah—*then* the return home would not have seemed wearisome! But, as it was, all that I could ask Prov was (the question being intended to show him that I was guileless of his having been asleep) "Has anyone called?" And, as usual, he replied, "No one." Somehow he always gives the reply in a regretful tone, and makes me feel inclined to ask him the reason of it. But though I am pleased that no one has called, I forbear, since Prov is a man of great respectability, and I should not like to shock his feelings.

Each night I write up (1) my diary, (2) my "Franklin's journal," and (3) my accounts. But I had spent nothing that day, for I had had nothing to pay for, and therefore did not need to make any entry in the account-book. And though the diary and the "journal" were another matter altogether, and should have been tackled, the hour was late, and I postponed them.

Often one hears it said, "So-and-so is futile. He has no purpose in life." And I myself have made the remark—though less for the sake of re-echoing others than because I in very truth believe a life without a purpose to be a life wasted.

But how can one of one's own accord become "fully human," and lead a purposeful life? For it is impossible to propound one's own purpose in life. Many times I have tried that, and always I have failed. Rather, instead of inventing one's purpose, one needs to discover it. And it should be a purpose

fully in harmony with one's bent, and existent from the first, even if but lately recognised. Such a purpose I believe myself at length to have discovered. It is, in every way to educate and develop my faculties. Towards that end my principal means are a diary and a "Franklin's journal"; to the former of which I confide all that I have done amiss, whilst in the latter I keep columns headed "Sloth," "Mendacity," "Gluttony," "Sensuality," "Lack of Self-respect," and the like, and, with crosses, transfer to those columns the entries in my diary.

But that night, as I undressed, I found myself reflecting, "After all, am I, in doing what I am doing, really educating and developing my faculties to virtue? Is that the road by which virtue can really be attained? If my 'journal' merely indexes my faults without diminishing their daily increase, what, after all, is the use of that 'journal'? Besides, even if I extinguish my faults entirely, would that be virtue? No, I am only deceiving myself: I am only playing with the matter as a child plays with a toy. Is it enough for a would-be artist merely to know what to avoid? Has ever anything useful come of the purely negative method of abstention? The husbandman needs to do more than clear his fields. He needs also to plough and to sow them. A better course would be that I should set myself fixed rules of virtue, and then follow them."

Thus spake to me my self-critical element.

Yes, to convert evil into good, was it sufficient

merely to extinguish evil's cause? Goodness was positive, but evil negative: and since goodness was positive, and evil negative, evil could be nullified, but never so goodness. But though our hearts had goodness implanted in them, and therefore were good, entwined in them also was evil, and therefore their goodness could not develop unchecked. Hence the simile of the husbandman was wrong. He had first of all to clear his fields, and to sow them, whereas in our hearts goodness lay ready-sown. The artist too needed to practise before he could attain skill, and, if not conforming to negative rules, at all events to renounce freewill; whereas we did not need to practise virtue, since life itself was practice in virtue. Cold was absence of heat; darkness was absence of light; evil was absence of good. How, therefore, came men so to love heat, light, and goodness? They loved them because those things were natural. And whereas heat and light and goodness had causes—the sun, and God, there did not exist such a thing as a sun of darkness and cold, nor a God of evil. As we beheld light and the sun's radiance we sought for their causes, and declared those causes to lie in the sun, and proved our statement by means of the laws of heat and light and gravity. So much for the physical world. And in the world of the spirit, we beheld goodness, and the radiance of goodness, and the action of that spiritual law of gravity which draws us ever towards the highest, and then declared those things to come of God, and said that, even as a dia-

mond, stripped of its matrix, has in it a sparkle, so human faults, stripped of their wrappings, have in them virtue.

"But," I continued, "are the faults, the petty errors, which you enter in your 'journal' the only things that are hindering you from becoming virtuous? Have you no great vices? No, you are only deceiving yourself; you are only playing the coward. Daily the multitude of your faults is increasing, and all the time there is no lasting correction, no real progress."

Thus spake to me my self-critical intellect, and, sure enough, I realised that, however much I might group my faults into three categories only, each such fault had many gradations of itself, and formed infinite combinations with its fellows, and that though those three categories were "Conceit," "Indecision," and "Folly," a given fault could not always be assigned to any category at all, through its arising, really, from a combination of itself and its fellows, and that, though I might succeed in reducing the size of the first two of those categories, the third was independent of them, and could improve with time alone. Why, I had that very day told a gratuitous lie, for, on receiving an invitation to dinner, I had declined on the score that some work was awaiting me. "What work?" I had been asked, and had replied, "An exercise in the English language," when all the time the work had been an exercise in gymnastics! Of this the three causes had, as usual, been (1) folly, in failing to perceive how foolish the lie would be,

(2) want of firmness, in hesitating to give the true reason for the refusal, and (3) conceit, in conceiving that an exercise in the English language would sound better, as an excuse, than an exercise in gymnastics.

So virtue did not lie merely in purging oneself of failings which might militate against one in life. No; virtue was self-denial all round. Besides, it was not true that virtue brought happiness, any more than it was true that happiness brought virtue. For whenever I made a fresh entry in my diary I felt no resentment against myself because of the failing, but only that, now that I had confessed the failing, it no longer existed. Which was a *pleasurable* sensation.

My ablutions performed, I got into bed. Always I find that I can pray more easily at night time than I can in the morning; for at night time I seem better to understand, and even to feel, what I am saying. Also, at night time I am not afraid of myself, whereas in the morning I am afraid of—oh, I am afraid of much that lies in the future.

Sleep is beautiful in its every phase—in its preparation, in its advent, and in its consummation. When I had laid myself down, that night, and was beginning to grow drowsy, suddenly there came to me the thought of how nice it would be always to be able to pass into oblivion as soon as one had tucked oneself in. And with that came thoughts of sleep's pleasures in general, so that I grew wakeful again. In-

deed, our every bodily pleasure is annulled by realisation of it, and therefore bodily pleasures never ought to be realised. For see how I myself, on realising a bodily pleasure, had at once found it escape me, and leave me wakeful! Phew! The nuisance of it! Why had God given us realisation if realisation was to make life more difficult? Why, in order that we might feel *moral* pleasures the more deeply. And with this reflection I turned over on to my other side, and, with the action, threw off the bedclothes! How I hate the feeling of lying uncovered in the darkness, for at such moments I always feel as though someone or something were about to seize me, or to apply something either very hot or very cold to one of my bare legs. So, hastily jerking back the clothes, I tucked in the coverlet all round, pulled a sheet right over my head, and murmured as I grew drowsy:

"O Morpheus, take me into thine arms! Thou art a divinity whose priest I would fain become. Dost thou remember how once I did give offence unto a dame by saying unto her, 'Quand je suis passé chez vous, vous étiez encore dans les bras de Morphée'? By 'Morphée' she did deem me to signify one who is quaintly named Andrei Malafei!"

How I love that phrase "dans les bras"! Vividly, delicately I began to picture myself "dans les bras" —then to picture the "bras" themselves—bare to the shoulder, curved and dimpled, framed in a white, indiscreetly open nightgown. For arms can indeed be beautiful, and especially one fold in them!

I stretched myself. The act reminded me of St. Thomas'[1] custom of forbidding us to do so. How like Diedrichs St. Thomas was! And what a day when we went hunting, and Demka viewed near Stanovoi, and Nalet beat the rest at the kill and in the hemp field, and Serezha[2] lost his temper! I could see St. Thomas talking to my sister. How well she was looking! And Masha? She too would have made a good wife. Morpheus himself would look well out hunting. But he would have to ride naked. How determined was St. Thomas to find a wife! Goodness! I could see him pounding along, and a young barinya overtaking us all at a gallop!—Ah, to stretch oneself was useless. One needed to stretch oneself—"dans les bras."

I dozed off, and saw myself overtaking the young barinya, and, on reaching a hill, clutching at her, and causing her to fall off (here I pushed a pillow from the bed). And when we reached home no dinner was ready! Why was that? Vasilii began to bluster (this was my housekeeper, on the other side of the wall, asking the kitchenmaid why she was making such a clattering, whilst the kitchenmaid answered her back—both of them causing the sounds actually to reach my ears, and penetrate into my dream). And just as we were enquiring for dinner we perceived that Vasilii was wearing a white robe, and

[1] Presumably, a reference to the Tolstoys' tutor, called St. Jerome in "Childhood."

[2] One of the author's brothers.

had got a sword slung about his shoulders; whereupon, much frightened, I fell upon my knees, and wept, and kissed his hands (though I would far rather have kissed *her* hands), but had no notice taken of me, and heard Vasilii ask, "Are the horses saddled?" and Diedrichs (the confectioner of Tula) answer with, "Ready! Present! Fire!" and a volley follow—which was Stavna, the kitchemaid, making a particularly loud bang. Then Vasilii and I danced a polka. But he was no longer Vasilii—he was *she!* And then, oh, horrors, I perceived that my trousers were growing shorter and shorter, and exposing my bare knees, and causing me inexpressible suffering by the discovery! (in reality I had let my knees thrust themselves forth from under the bedclothes, and only after many unsuccessful efforts succeeded in re-covering them). And whilst we were still dancing the polonaise I found myself to be dancing, not a polonaise, but a kozachka,[1] and asking myself why I was doing so, and realizing that I could not help it. And the worst came when, on my overshoes and cloak being brought me, I found that by that time I had no trousers on at all!—Yet was I really naked, or was I only fancying that I was?

Here I awoke—then dozed again—then lay thinking until I was tired—then took to picturing scenes which at first came vividly, connectedly, and then but dimly—fading off into imaginative presentiments. And so, tucked under the bedclothes, and feeling,

[1] Cossack dance.

now, that I was secure from everyone and everything, I fell asleep with all my body.

Sleep is made up of a first impression, and of a second, and is the state of the human being when total unconsciousness has supervened. But since the human being falls asleep gradually, he loses consciousness gradually. Sometimes we know consciousness as the spirit; but, whereas the spirit is a homogeneous entity, consciousness is made up of the same number (three) of parts as the human being. Which three parts are the intellect, the sensibility, and the body. Of these, the intellect is the highest, and belongs to developed human beings only—does not belong to animals, or to beast-like human beings. Also, it is the first of the three consciousnesses to fall asleep. As for the consciousness of the sensibility, most human beings possess it, but not all. It is the second of the three consciousnesses to fall asleep. And the consciousness of the body falls asleep last of the three, yet, even so, seldom in its entirety. This graduality in falling asleep is not experienced by animals at all, and by human beings only when the loss of consciousness follows upon either a very strong impression or drunkenness—when, both in the one case and in the other, sleep comes immediately.

Recollection of time spent in sleep originates otherwise than does recollection of time spent in waking: for in the one case the recollection comes of our capacity to group impressions, whereas in the other it comes of memory, of impressions of life

gathered by our faculties. Even as we awake we conjoin into one combined impression the sum-total of our impressions gathered during drowsiness and sleep—for sleep is seldom total throughout its duration—under the influence, primarily, of the impression which has led up to the awakening. And though that awakening itself is graduated—for it begins with the lowest faculty, and ends with the highest—it yet proceeds so swiftly as to elude cognisance, and to lead us, aided by the time-graduation and the time-form which our envisagement of life causes us to accept as customary, to mistake, in that moment of awakening, our conjoined and accumulated sleep-impressions for recollections of the time just spent in sleep. To give an instance of a dream and its details until one of those details causes the awakening thence, one may seem to go shooting, and load one's gun, and flush some game, and aim at the game, and fire, so that the awakening comes of the sound of the discharge, even though what really has happened is merely that one has, say, knocked over one's water bottle in one's sleep. Or one may seem to go to see a friend, and wait for him, and then be told that he is out—with the tones of the announcement causing the awakening. On the other hand, heaven preserve us from dreams of the sort of person who professes to see something notable or significant in every dream! For, through sheer habit, these people base conclusions upon guesswork, set up a form to which to reduce everything, supply from their imagination

anything wanting, and eliminate anything unsuitable. Thus a mother will relate that in a dream she has seen a daughter of hers flying up to heaven, and saying as she went, "Farewell, mother dear! I will pray for you," when all that she has really seen is her daughter ascending to a house roof, and saying nothing as she did so, and changing into some sweep or another of an Ivan, and saying, "A-a-ah! *You* couldn't climb up here as I have done!"

To prove all this, try it upon yourself. First recall the thoughts and mental images that have come to you during a time of sleep, and then ask anyone who has beheld you during that time to tell you of any circumstances that may have reacted upon you. And when you have done that you will be able to understand why any given thing has been seen by you in a dream. Remember, however, that during sleep the circumstances of reaction may be so many and various, and depend to such an extent upon temperament, upon stomach, or upon physical causes in general, as to be past enumeration. Take the saying that if we dream that we are flying or swimming, the fact means that we are growing. Notice why one day you are flying, and why another day you are swimming—recall all the circumstances, and at once the thing will become explainable. A possible reason why people relate of dreams such things as they do is that, through sheer habit, they have what they relate already compounded in their imaginations: and if so,

the fact goes additionally to prove my theory of sleep.

Probably, if such a person could have beheld my own dream, he would have related it as follows: "I saw St. Thomas running for a long, long time, and said to him, 'Why are you running?' and he replied, 'Because I am looking for a wife.' Which means either that he is going to be married or that you yourself are going to receive a letter!"

Nor has graduality of time any place in sleep recollections. All that one can remember in this respect is what went before what. When, after awaking yesterday morning, I recalled things in the order, firstly, that I went with my brother, secondly, that I caught a wife of exemplary virtue who lives on the Island, and thirdly, that St. Thomas came and begged my pardon for something.[1]

Often, too, almost always, it happens that during a night's sleep one awakens once or twice with only the two inferior consciousnesses awakened. If so, and if one goes to sleep again, the impressions present at the awakening will re-coalesce into a dream without sequence. But if the third and highest consciousness also has awakened, the dream dreamt on falling asleep again will be dreamt as though divided into two halves.

[1] The reader will notice that this description of the dream does not coincide with the earlier one. The translator hazards that for some reason or another the author was prevented from fully revising his manuscript.

HOW LOVE DIES

HOW LOVE DIES

Translated by Mrs. Lydia Turin

I

The Meeting

On a frosty night, early in January, 1850, a hired cab, drawn by a pair of tired, emaciated horses, was rolling along the Tverskays.

Only the deep-blue, lofty sky, all strewn with stars disappearing in an infinite distance, and the coachman's beard, silvery with hoar-frost, and the air so rarefied by the cold that it caught at one's breath, and nipped one's cheeks, and the creaking of wheels in the frozen snow were present to remind one of the Twelfth Night which, from early childhood, we love poetically for the traditions of our distant past, and for the customs of our people, and because of our anticipations of something mysterious, something unusual.

For on this night there were no deep snow-drifts to cover doors and palings and windows; no narrow,

hard-trodden footpaths around them; no towering trees with their branches grey with frost; no illimitable, monotonous fields of white under the shimmer of a brilliant wintry moon; none of the wonderful silence of a rural night that is so fraught with haunting charm. No, there were only tall, red-roofed houses of a depressingly similar pattern which hid the horizon on either side, and tired the eye with their uniformity. Never for a moment did the city's rumble of wheels cease. And everywhere in its train it left a sense of infinite weariness. Dung-coloured snow was on the thoroughfares, though here and there they were brightened by the light falling upon them from shop windows, and from dull street lamps which, with a ladder propped against them, a night watchman had trimmed. In all this there was a sharp contrast to the wintry night's boundless pall. It was the world of God, and the world of man.

The cab stopped at the door of a particularly well lit-up shop, and a slender, good-looking lad of about eighteen, in a round hat and a greatcoat with a beaver collar, alighted, ran up the steps of the porch, set the entrance-bell ringing, and hurriedly entered.

"Une paire de gants, je vous prie."

"Vot numero?"

"Six et demie," replied the lad, fumbling for his purse, and walking up and down as he did so.

"Is that you, my son?" a firm, sonorous voice enquired from the adjoining room.

The sound of it, and, still more, the fact that it

had addressed him as "my son," told the young man that this was his social mentor, Prince Kornakov, a man who occupied a most brilliant position in the world of Moscow. Very tall, of about thirty years of age, red-whiskered, with a long, thin nose, and fine lips which, when they were not smiling, were set in a calm, severe line, he was sitting, with legs stretched out, before a large mirror which reflected also the well-knit, shapely figure and dress suit of the newcomer. Meanwhile M. Charles was permittedly giving full expressions to his skill as a hairdresser as he twirled the curling tongs in his pomatum'ed hands, and scolded Ernest whenever the latter handed him the hot implements. He was, as he expressed it, giving "un coup de peine a la coiffure de la plus estimable de ses pratiques."

"Are you going to the ball, my dear son?" the Prince enquired.

"I am. And you, Prince?"

"Alas, yes, for I have promised to do so. Surely you see these?" And he pointed to his white waistcoat and tie.

"Do you not wish to go," asked the lad in surprise as he paced up and down. "How else would you spend the evening?"

"I should sleep," was the Prince's wholly unaffected reply.

"I cannot understand you."

"Ten years ago I too should not have understood it. Ten years ago I would have travelled three hun-

dred miles, and at my best speed, rather than miss a ball. But then I was young, and fell in love at every ball, and, most important of all, knew that, no matter in what direction I turned my head, no one would see its baldness, its false hair, and its false teeth. By the way, to whom are *you* now making love?" he added as he rose, stood in front of the mirror, and patted his collar into place.

The question, though put in quite a conversational tone, surprised and embarrassed the younger man.

"I have never . . . I have never made love to anyone yet," was his blushing reply.

"Oh, I had forgotten. Yes, your cousin told me only this morning that you had fallen in love with our dear *'Debardeur.'* How is it that you have not been presented to her?"

"Apparently there has been no suitable occasion."

"Nonsense! Admit that you have been unable to make up your mind to it. I know that true love, especially first love, is always shy."

"My cousin is going to present me to her to-night," said the lad with a smile of embarrassment.

"Not so. You must let *me* present you, my dear son—I can do it much better than your cousin can, and, as you will see, bring you luck!" The last was added with a smile. "To be successful where women are concerned," he continued dictatorially, "you must be bold and enterprising. Nothing emboldens one like success, especially in one's first love affair. But even to be successful in that you must try to over-

come that insufferable false modesty of yours, which will only handicap you. Come, let us go."

II

The Two Children

The lad's name was Sereja Ivin. He was a charming boy, with a young soul upon which a consciousness of wrong had not yet cast its shadow, so that it was still full of bright dreams and noble impulses. Scarcely had he left the nursery and the schoolroom behind him before he found himself, involuntarily, imperceptibly, at home in the easy-going, and, if one may say so, homely, society of Moscow, where people of breeding and quality are at once accepted as members of the family, no matter what their real character may be, but welcomed with especial trustfulness if, like Ivin, they have not yet had time to have a past of which Society is unaware.

Difficult would it be to say whether this was a good thing for Ivin. On the one hand, Society gave him a great deal of pleasure—and the capacity for enjoyment unclouded by regrets and remorse is, if one is still young, a very wonderful thing indeed. But on the other hand, Society was imperceptibly infecting him with a love of vainglory, a base passion, for the variety of pleasures which Society and its conventions offered was inimical to the strength and the

constancy of the boy's better impulses. Dreams of love and friendship and, alas, pride had the charm of the unknown, and, with youthful enthusiasm, were bringing about in him a strange confusion. At balls of the present, his first, season he had met a certain Countess Shofing whom Prince Kornakov (who nicknamed everybody) had, for some reason of his own, called "our dear Debardeur." Sereja always gazed at her with a joy for which he could not account. And often, when he could not see her, would his thoughts travel to her. Once in particular when his eyes encountered the Countess's curious, level glance, the look gave him so much pleasure, yet also, God only knows why, so startled him, that several times afterwards he avoided being presented to her.

All the qualities likely to attract a young lad like Sereja stood united in the Countess. In the first place, she was beautiful with the beauty both of a child and of a woman, and had a clever little face all radiant with a gentle gaiety; and in the second place, she held a very high place in Society—and few things add so much to a woman's charm as the reputation of being socially charming, for such a reputation makes her at once happy and conspicuous. And Countess Shofing was endowed also with an alluring quality possessed by none but a very few: she was *simple*. Not that her simplicity was the simplicity which merely constitutes the negation of affectation. No, her simplicity was the naïve, sweet sim-

plicity, so rarely met with, which makes a woman charming in an unusual degree. Straightforwardly she would put a question, and simply she would answer one. In her conversation there was never a hint of *arrière pensée;* she just said whatsoever came into her pretty and sensible little head. She was one of those rare women whom all her fellows like. She was liked even by those who should have envied her. And she attracted the more attention because she had made an unhappy marriage. Count Shofing was an adventurer on a large scale who had several times made a fortune, and several times squandered it, and then, as a fitting conclusion to his adventures, married an heiress. The reasons which prompted this alliance were not known. The only thing known was that love had played no part in the affair. Not but that Count Shofing had a certain fondness for the Countess, for she was the most obedient and gentle of wives, and he liked her as any man likes a pretty woman. At the time of this story they had been married rather less than a year. Sentimental ladies declared him unworthy of her, and unable to understand her qualities, but this cannot wholly have been so, for at least the pretty Countess wanted no other lover or husband than her Jean, and bore him much such an affection as his own for her. Nor had she loved anyone before marriage, nor did she love anyone now, since, though some men attracted her, she knew them to be unworthy of love—they did but, so far as she could see, resemble her own Jean. Un-

fortunate, though, was it that her Jean should be a spendthrift, a gambler, a ne'er-do-well who already had gambled away over half his wife's fortune. But does a well-bred Russian lady ever know the precise amount of her possessions, any more than she realises that, unless the blood and toil of her ancestors had acquired those possessions, she would not now be finding it possible to live? The beautiful Countess Shofing might be aware that her husband had, so far, lost forty or sixty thousand at the tables, and that he would gamble again to-night. In a hazy fashion she might realise that her Jean was doing wrong. But to think of it bored her, and it was in a similar frame of mind that she now set out for the ball at which Sereja and Prince Kornakov also were to be present.

III

The Ball

Is there any need to give a detailed description of the ball? Who can have forgotten the striking impression produced by the brilliance of the thousands of lights, by the eyes and diamonds and flowers and velvet and silk and bare shoulders and muslin and hair and black coats and white waistcoats and satin shoes and multicoloured uniforms and liveries; the fragrance of flowers, and the scent of women; the thousands of voices and footsteps under the gay, en-

ticing melodies of waltz and polka; the unceasing movement; the bizarre effect of all these elements combined?

The emotions evoked in the two men of our acquaintance, however, were vastly dissimilar. Sereja felt so excited that anyone could have detected the rapid, uneven beating of his heart under his waistcoat. And before entering he had to pause at the head of the staircase, less, in reality, to smooth his hair than to recover his breath and wait for the blush upon his face to disappear. Prince Kornakov, on the contrary, after addressing a few words to his hostess, entered the large ballroom, and at once joined his own aristocratic clique, which always kept separate from the others. He did so merely as though he were entering his bedroom: he did so with the same certainty of his next proceedings as a Civil Servant might, on reaching his office, direct himself to his desk. Nothing unforeseen could ever befall the Prince: he was too respectable, lived in too respectable a community, for anything unpleasant to fall to his lot. Long ago he had forgotten such a possibility as deriving pleasure from a ball. Even observation, the one interest for the man who takes no active part in such a function, had lost its novelty. There, for example, was the beautiful Miss D., who dressed always with such taste and variety, smilingly listening, as usual, to the compliments so often heard before from the lips of her constant admirers A., B., C., D. and the rest. And Nadenka of the pretty eyes

must also be present, and, consequently, the baron with the monocle and the bad French who has been anxious for a year past to marry her, but never will. Yes, he too must be somewhere in the vicinity. And there the small adjutant with the large nose who believes present day courtesy and good sense to consist of retailing obscenities. Yes, there he is, helpless with laughter as he recounts something to Miss G., the emancipated spinster.

The card tables are in the same places as usual, and occupied by the same people as usual, with the stakes the same as at the last five of Madame P.'s annual balls. And she, Madame P., has the usual fixed smile of welcome upon her face, and the same phrases, repeated hundreds of times at each such annual ball, are upon her lips as she bustles from room to room. And in the centre are five or six students, and two recently arrived guardsmen, and Tamarin and Gubkov and Negichev, all of whom have grown old on Moscow dance-floors, and wearied everyone out, though they are dancing still. And against the walls near the door stand obscure, motionless men who have come to the ball for reasons known to God alone. Occasionally a stir is seen amongst them as one of the more heroic emerges, marches shyly across the floor, approaches the only lady present that he knows, takes a few turns with her—a proceeding which apparently she finds highly distasteful—and then loses himself again behind the sheltering wall of his fellows. Also are there woe-

begone young ladies who know no one, but have been invited at the urgent request of their relatives, seated along the walls—almost disfigured with vexation because even the beautiful gowns which have entailed months of patient labour have caused no man to desire them for partners. But a full description is difficult. To Prince Kornakov the ball's outstanding feature was that the whole of it was so horribly familiar. For he had seen many old people leave, and many new people enter, the social arena without that arena's relations, conversations and actions undergoing the smallest alteration. The physical environment, the buffet, the supper, the music, the furniture—the Prince knew them all so well that to have to look upon them again for about the twentieth time was almost unbearable.

The fact was that he was one of those wealthy, middle-aged bachelors to whom Society becomes at once the most indispensable and the most boring of necessities. He needed Society because from early youth he had occupied a chief place in it, and yet had to make no effort to attain that place. And now he was too vain to try to lead another, an unknown, kind of life, or even to admit that he could ever contemplate the possibility of doing such a thing. And Society wearied him the more because he was clever enough to see the vanity of constant social relations between people who were bound to each other neither by common interests nor by noble emotions, but yet supposed the entire purpose of life to consist of those

relations' artificial maintenance. And meanwhile his spirit unconsciously grieved both for his wasted past and for his promise-less future. Yet that grief found expression neither in moroseness nor in remorse, but only in an embittered flow of small talk that was sometimes acrid, sometimes frivolous, but always clever, frank and original. Also, so small was the part which he took in the affairs of his circle, and such his birds-eye view of it, that for him to come into conflict with anybody was practically an impossibility. Hence, loved by no one, and hated by no one, he just accepted that sort of general worship which is the prerogative of those who reputedly constitute Society.

IV

Enchantment

"Encore un tour, je t'en prie," was Sereja's prayer to his cousin as, clasping her slender waist, he, for the tenth time, with cheeks flushed, made an easy, graceful circuit of the ballroom.

"No, that is enough. I am tired," his pretty cousin replied with a smile as she removed her hand from his shoulder.

Sereja, thus forced to halt, happened to do so near the very doorway in which Prince Kornakov was carelessly lounging. Also, the Prince, looking calm

and self-satisfied, was at the moment engaged in conversation with the Countess Shofing.

"Here he is," he said as he looked at Sereja. "Come here," he added after a respectful bow to Sereja's cousin. "The Countess wishes to have you presented."

"I have long desired this honour," murmured Sereja, boyishly embarrassed.

"Well, until now that has not been excessively obvious," the Countess responded with a frank smile. Sereja stood silent and still blushing as he tried to think of something not too *banal* to say next, whilst Prince Kornakov seemed to enjoy watching his friend's evident difficulty. But as soon as he realised that the difficulty was not passing away, but, on the contrary, communicating itself also to the Countess, notwithstanding her social training, he said:

"Accordez vous un tour de valse, Mme. La Comtesse?"

The Countess, aware that the Prince's dancing days were over, looked at him in surprise.

"Pas à moi, Mme. la Comtesse. Je me sens trop laid, et trop vieux, pour prétendre à cet honneur. Forgive me, my dear son," he added, "for taking the liberty of acting as your interpreter."

Sereja bowed. But just as the Countess rose, and bent her lovely arm, and raised it to his shoulder, whilst Sereja's arm encircled her waist, the music stopped, and they had to stand in this position until the band could be made aware of signs made to them

by the Prince, and started the valse afresh. Never will Sereja forget the few seconds during which twice he pressed his lady's waist, and twice he released it!

He seemed not to feel his feet moving over the floor. What he felt was a sensation as of leaving the crowd behind him. All his powers became centred in listening to the strains of the music sufficiently to move slower or faster as they required, and in a consciousness of the Countess's form as it so harmonised with his every movement as to make him and her seem one; and in the occasional glance which, with an incomprehensible sense of mingled fear and joy, he directed either at her white shoulders or at her bright blue eyes—eyes dimmed with a liquidness which gave them an expression of mysterious passion and tenderness.

"Do look! What could be more charming than this couple?" said Prince Kornakov to Sereja's cousin. "You know, it is my passion to bring good-looking young people together."

"Yes, and Serge is absolutely happy."

"And not Serge alone, for I am certain that the Countess is enjoying dancing with him far more than if she were dancing with an old man like myself."

"You force me to say once more that you are not old!"

"What do you take me to be? True, I know that I am not really of any great age, but I am worse—I am tired and *blasé,* like all those other men yonder, even though in their case they do not know that they

are so. Sereja has, firstly, the charm of novelty to help him: and secondly it is my opinion that no woman could imagine, or could wish for, a more attractive man than he. Look at the pair!" he continued with a pleased smile. "Are not they delightful? What a sweet woman she is! Really I am in love with them both!"

"I will tell Lisa" (that was Countess Shofing's Christian name) "what you have said."

"No. Long ago I asked the Countess to forgive my inability to fall in love with her, and she knows that I say what I do only because I am no longer capable of falling in love with anyone. Yet those two quite entrance me."

Nor was Prince Kornakov alone in enjoying the spectacle of Sereja and Countess Shofing dancing. Involuntarily all the dancers were following them with their eyes: some out of pure pleasure at so beautiful a sight, others out of anger and jealousy. So stimulated was Sereja by the combined effects of movement, music, and love that when the Countess asked him to take her back to her place, and smiled her thanks as she removed her hand from his shoulder, he became filled with a desire, difficult to resist, to seize the opportunity of kissing her. Yes, for the first time in his life the innocent lad experienced the feeling of love, even though he did not understand the dim yearnings that were informing his soul. But at least had he no fear of surrendering himself to those yearnings.

V

Love

To Sereja, the ball seemed a sort of wonderful, enchanting dream, a dream in whose reality he at once longed and was afraid to believe. The Countess's free dance was only the sixth quadrille; and though, as they danced it together, their conversation was but the usual conversation of a ball, every word in it seemed to Sereja fraught with a special significance, whether it was the significance conveyed by a smile, or by a look, or by a movement. During the quadrille, D., the Countess's acknowledged admirer, took a seat beside them: whereupon Sereja, imagining D. to be taking him for a mere boy, conceived against the intruder a violent feeling of animosity. However, the Countess's sweetness and kindness to her new acquaintance continued unabated, whereas she treated D. with marked coldness, and, on turning to Sereja again, looked and smiled at him with added pleasure.

No two emotions are so closely allied to, yet so destructive of, one another as love and jealousy. Wherefore, combined, the two passions completely turned poor young Sereja's head. Twice, during a mazurka, the Countess selected him for her partner, and twice, in return, he chose her for his. During one of the figures, also, she gave him her bouquet

to hold: whereupon Sereja tore from it a small sprig, and hid it in his glove. The Countess, seeing this, smiled.

The Countess could not stay to supper, and Sereja accompanied her to the staircase.

"I hope to see you at my house," she said as she gave him her hand.

"When may I come, then?"

"At any time you like."

"At any time?" he repeated, his voice trembling with emotion, as he pressed with involuntary ardour the little hand which rested so confidingly in his own.

The Countess blushed, and the little hand trembled. Was that because she wished to return the pressure, or was it because she wished to free herself from it? Who can say? At all events, a shy smile was quivering upon her tiny mouth as she descended the staircase.

Sereja felt filled with ineffable joy. And the first love that was stirring in his soul could not centre itself upon one object alone, but extended itself to all and sundry. Everybody now seemed kind, loving, worthy of love. Halting on the stairs, he took the sprig from his glove, and pressed it to his lips so rapturously that the tears welled into his eyes.

"Well, are you pleased with our sweet *Débardeur?*" asked Prince Kornakov.

"I am so grateful to you indeed! Never in my life have I been so happy," was Sereja's reply as he wrung his friend's hand.

VI

She Might Have Been Happy

As soon as she reached home the Countess, according to her custom, enquired for the Count. He had not yet returned and for the first time in her life she felt pleased that that was so, for she wished to have a brief time in which to continue withdrawn from certain realities of life which that evening had rendered oppressive to her, and to be left alone with her dreams. For those dreams now were beautiful.

Sereja was so unlike all men whom she had hitherto met that her attention could not help being attracted by him. Upon his every movement, utterance, and look there rested the glamour of youth and a frank and gentle spirit. To the Countess, who had lived her whole life until now in the unnatural sphere known as Society, a boy so innocent as still to be a stranger to passion and to sinful pleasures (a type which ought to be common in a society adhering to the laws of nature, but is, alas, only too rarely to be met with there) was an enchanting, charming novelty indeed.

Probably, in her white dressing-gown and cap the Countess looked prettier even than in evening dress as, propped against the pillows in the spacious bed, and letting a wistful smile play upon her lovely mouth, she gazed at the palely glimmering lamp.

"May I come in, Lisa?" at length the Count enquired at the door.

"Yes," she replied without altering her posture.

"Did you enjoy yourself, dearest?" inquired the Count as he embraced her.

"I did."

"Then why are you looking so mournful? Are you vexed with me for any reason?"

The Countess did not reply. Only her lips trembled a little, like those of a child about to cry.

"Are you angry with me for gambling? Then do not worry, darling, for to-night I have won back all my losses, and I intend never again to touch a card. . . . What is really the matter?" he added tenderly as he kissed her hands.

Still the Countess did not reply. And though by this time tears were flowing from her eyes as the Count caressed and questioned her, she could not tell him why she wept: she could only continue weeping.

Ah, do not touch her, thou creature destitute of heart and conscience! She is weeping for the very reason that you are caressing her, that you have the right to do so—weeping for the beautiful dreams which have dissolved like mist on coming into contact with realities—realities indifferent to her until to-night, but now become terrible and abhorrent through the realisation that for ever must true love and happiness remain unattainable!

VII

Sereja is Introduced to a Gentleman of Reputation

"Are you bored, my dear son?" Prince Kornakov enquired of a Sereja who was wandering from room to room, and taking no part in either conversation or dancing. On the lad's face there was a strange expression of anxiety and *ennui*.

"Yes," he replied with a sudden smile. "I want to go home now."

"Then home let it be. Nous causerons!"

"I hope you are not going to stay for supper, Kornakov?" said a stout, tall man of about forty with a bloated, ugly, impertinent face as he strode, hat in hand, through the crowd in the doorway.

"Have you finished your rubber?"

"I have, thank goodness! I contrived to do so before supper should be due, and now am fleeing from the ills of mayonnaise, truffles, caviàre, and the rest." His voice was loud enough to fill the whole ballroom.

"Then where are you going to sup?"

"At Trakhmanovs', if he isn't asleep yet, or she at the Novotroitzkoye. So come along. Atalov will be with us as well!"

"Will you too come, Ivin?" Prince Kornakov enquired. "Do you and he know one another yet?"

Sereja shook his head.

"Sergius Ivin, Maria Mikhailovna's son," said the Prince.

"Pleased to meet you," the stout gentleman said as he extended a fat hand, but continued on his way. "Come along when you can."

It would be superfluous to give a detailed description of the stout gentleman (whose name was N. N. Dolgov), since probably every reader of this tale has seen, or at least heard of, him. Suffice it to mention merely such characteristics of his as will enable my readers further to visualise the gentleman in all his sordid viciousness. He was one of whom it might be said that wealth, nobility, breeding, and great and varied gifts all stood in him either destroyed entirely or distorted by vice and idleness; that his cynical brain halted before no problem, before no consideration, which affected his base passions; that he had no sense of shame, no conscience, and no knowledge of cleanly delights, but only a frank, vicious egoism, a gift of coarse and caustic eloquence, much lasciviousness and gluttony and drunkenness, and a contempt for everybody but himself; and that he regarded all things solely from the point of view of how much pleasure they might give him, or how much they might fail to do so. Thus the two chief features about him were his senseless, aimless, absolutely indolent life, and a tendency to the vilest debauches which he took no pains to conceal, but delighted to display, as if he gloried in his lack of moral sense. Yet,

though people called him a bad man, everywhere, and on every occasion, he was received with respect, and people were proud to know him. And, aware of this, he laughed at them, and despised them more than ever. How, indeed, could he help being contemptuous of virtue when he had spent his life in trampling upon it, and yet, in his own way, contrived to be happy through satisfaction of his appetites and enjoyment of universal esteem?

Sereja was now in an exceptionally good temper, for it always gave him pleasure to be with Prince Kornakov, whom he liked, and who always exercised a subtle influence over him. Also, his recent introduction to a person so remarkable as the stout gentleman tickled his vanity. The stout gentleman at first paid him scant attention, but later became more civil when the Cossack waiter requisitioned on the party's arrival at the Novotroitzkoye had brought them cakes and wine. Then, observing the young man's unconstrained manner, he began to talk to him, pat him upon the shoulder, and clink glasses. For to men like Dolgov nothing is so distasteful as shyness.

The true thoughts and feelings of a man in love are centred upon one object. Hence he has little time to observe, or to analyse, the characters of other people whom he meets, and is not discomfited by that reluctance to take acquaintances at their face value, or by that desire to probe those acquaintances' inner and more hidden thoughts and motives, which especially distinguishes the young.

Besides, this evening Sereja was especially conscious of both the will and the capacity to be interesting and amusing. Yet though to know Dolgov, the *roué* and retired general, had hitherto been the height of his ambition, he now, so far from delighting in its realisation, had a feeling, rather, that the general ought to be honoured by speaking to *him,* seeing that, as he, Sereja, talked, he might very well be thinking of *her.* Never before, either, had he dared to address Kornakov in the second person singular, though the latter had frequently taken that liberty towards himself. Now, however, he called him "thou" with freedom, and took delight in doing so. The Countess's friendly looks and smile had given him more self-confidence than ever had come to him of any cleverness, or good looks, or university degree of his own, or of the praise to which he had always been used. In one hour he had crossed the boundary which divides childhood from manhood. He had suddenly become aware that he possessed the very qualities of a man whose fancied lack he had hitherto deplored—firmness, resolution, boldness, and proud self-confidence. A careful observer might have noticed that that evening he had changed even physically, for his step had become more elastic and sure, his chest broader, his hands less superfluous, his head raised, whilst the boyish softness of his features was gone, and the muscles of forehead and cheeks had grown more pronounced, and his smile had taken on a bolder, more assured import.

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VIII

Revelry

So the small, red back room of the Novotroitzkoye Restaurant which the landlord usually set aside for his most esteemed patrons was, this night, occupied by a party consisting of Prince Kornakov, the General, Atalov (a guardsman from St. Petersburg), and Sereja.

"Do you know whose health I am drinking?" Sereja said to Kornakov as he filled his glass, and raised it to his lips.

Sereja's face was flushed, and his eyes moist and strange.

"Never mind. We will drink it," was Kornakov's reply as a gentle smile illumined the face which usually looked so bored and cold.

Several times was the health of the unknown person drunk.

The General, after taking off his overcoat, had stretched himself upon a couch with cigar in hand, and a bottle of cognac, a glass and a small piece of cheese placed before him. His features were looking more than usually flushed and bloated, and in his insolent, half-closed eyes there was an expression of satiety.

"This is what I like to see," he said as he glanced

at Sereja, who was sitting opposite, and gulping down glassful after glassful. "At one time I myself used to drink champagne just as you are doing. At a ball I used to drink a bottle of it, and then dance and be more entertaining than ever."

"Personally I have no regrets in that way," said Kornakov, resting his head upon his hand, and looking despondently at Sereja's handsome, animated eyes. "Even now I can drink to any extent, but what is the good of it? I am only sorry that the time has gone by when every night I, like that lad, drank a certain health, and would have died a thousand deaths rather than forego the privilege. On occasions I even manoeuvred to get the dregs of the bottle, for I believed that I should marry her without fail, and drank her health again in the last few drops! But fancy if I had married all the ladies to whom I drank last drops! What a bevy of charming wives I should have had! Now, here are your own dregs," he added as he poured those remnants into Sereja's glass. "But I forget. You do not require them." He smiled at the lad a gay, gentle smile.

"Do not remind me of that! I have been forgetting everything that I do not wish to remember. I am completely happy!" The light of Sereja's eyes indeed had in it the pure joy which fills a young heart on surrendering itself fearlessly to its first love.

"Is he not delightful?" said Kornakov to the General. "You cannot imagine how much he reminds me of myself. Debouchons-le tout a fait!"

"Yes," the General said. "You know that I. . . . Allons aux femmes, and let's take him with us."

Five minutes later Sereja, seated in Kornakov's sleigh, with the crisp, frosty air cutting his face, had before him the driver's broad back, and to either side of him, flashing by, dim lanterns and the walls of houses.

IX

Dreams

"I am in the country, in dear Semenovskoye, where I was born, and where my childhood was spent. It is an evening in spring. I am in the garden, in my mother's favourite spot, in the avenue of birches leading to the pond. But I am not alone there. With me is a lady in a white gown whose hair lies softly piled upon a head of beauty. She is the lady whom I love as I have never loved woman before; the lady, whom I love more than all else in the wide, wide world, more even than I love myself. The moon is floating athwart a sky flecked with transparent clouds. It and the clouds together lie reflected in the mirror-like surface of the pond's calm waters. Lit up by the moon are the yellow bull-rushes, the pond's green banks, the pale logs of the weir, the weeping willows bending over the pond, the blossoming lilacs' and wildberries' dark verdure. All the air is full of joyous, vernal fragrance from rose bushes

intertwined in beds beside the paths, from the long, hanging, motionless branches of tall birches, from the tender, lush greenery of limes in straight, dark avenues. In the thicket, across the pond, a nightingale's song, loud and tuneful, is evoking echoes from the water's still surface. I have my beloved's tender hand in mine. I am gazing down into wonderful, great eyes every single glance of which is balm to my soul. She smiles and presses my hand. She too is happy."

Foolish, happy dreams! Foolish because they can never come true. Happy because they are instinct with poetic emotion. Yet though they can never come true, though it is impossible that they should do so, why need such dreams be resisted if the mere enchantment of them fills one with pure and noble joy? Sereja did not stop to ask himself how the lady was ever to become his wife, seeing that she was married already, nor, even if that were possible, whether it would also be good in the moral sense, nor how, in such case, he would order his life thereafter. To him a life holding aught save moments of love and rapture now seemed impossible. True love feels itself to contain so wholly that which is pure and holy and strong and independent and courageous that for it sin and obstacles and life's more prosaic details have ceased altogether to exist.

. . . . .

Suddenly the sleigh stopped, and the cessation of its rhythmic, lulling motion awoke Sereja with a start.

X

The Gipsies

Prince Kornakov and the General were standing on the doorstep of a small house, with the General hammering at the door, and making it bend and creak under his blows. He tugged at the sagging, rusted wire which hung from the lintel, and shouted loudly: "Hi, Chavaly! Open, Chavaly!"

After a time the pair heard cautious, unsteady, slippered feet shuffling over a floor, and then a light gleamed from behind the shutters, the door opened, and an old, bent woman showed herself on the threshold. Over her white dressing-gown a mantle of fox fur was thrown, whilst in her gnarled hand was a guttering tallow candle, and her wrinkled, sharp, keen features, dark, gleaming eyes, black hair—as black as a raven's wing—and swarthy, brick-coloured skin all proclaimed her to be a gipsy. On raising her candle to the level of the General's and the Prince's faces, she recognised them, and at once gave her joy vociferous expression.

"Oh dear, oh dear, my good sirs!" she exclaimed in a voice the more piercing for its curious gipsy accent. "This is indeed a pleasure! It is as though it were the dear, bright sun himself! And you, too, Mikolai Mikolaevich? Why, it is long since you

were here last. How pleased my girls will be! I beg of you to enter. We will have some dancing."

"Are your people in?"

"Yes, all of them, and they will be here immediately, my very dear sir. Pray enter, pray enter."

"Entrons," said Prince Kornakov, and the four, still keeping their hats and coats on, entered a low, dingy room which, but for its untidness, was a replica of the usual room of the lower middle classes. Small mirrors in red frames, a ragged couch with a wooden back, and soiled tables and chairs of imitation mahogany completed the furniture.

Young people are capable of being, and frequently are, carried away by evil if the evil takes place in the presence of persons whom they respect. Sereja had forgotten his dreams already, and was watching this, to him, novel episode with the curiosity of one who is observing a chemical experiment. He at once observed what was happening and looked forward impatiently to what might be going to happen, and conceived at least that some entertainment was bound to come of it all.

A young gipsy with long black curly hair, squinting, rather terrifying eyes, and huge white teeth had been sleeping on the couch. He now leapt to his feet, scrambled into his clothes, spoke a few words to the old crony in the sonorous gipsy tongue, and bowed to the newcomers with a smile.

"Who is your conductor now?" enquired the Prince. "It is a long time since I was last here."

"Ivan Matveich!" the gipsy replied.

"Vanka?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who the leaders of the choir?"

"Tania and Maria Vasilievna."

"And what of Masha who used to live with B., the pretty one? Has she returned to you?"

"She has, sir," the gipsy responded with another smile. "And sometimes she joins in the dancing."

"Go and fetch her. Also, bring some champagne."

The gipsy took the money and disappeared.

The General, as was only to be expected of one of the gipsies' oldest patrons, then seated himself astride of a chair, and questioned the old woman about others of the gipsy men and women of the clan. He knew all their kith and kin.

The guardsman insisted that there was not a woman worthy of the name to be found in Moscow, and that no enjoyment was to be got from a gipsy establishment—the surroundings alone being unsavoury enough to repel all decent people: whereas to invite them to one's own establishment was quite different. The Prince averred, on the contrary, that gipsies were satisfactory in no atmosphere but their domestic one, and required much understanding. To all of which Sereja listened in silence, whilst secretly agreeing with the Prince, for he found the environment both novel and pleasing. Occasionally the door into the hall would open to admit a gust of cold air

as the gipsies who belonged to the choir entered in couples. The men wore baggy breeches, long boots, and blue, tight-fitting coats which showed off their figures to advantage. Also, all had luxuriant, curly hair. As for the women, they had satin-trimmed mantles of fox fur thrown over handsome and costly, though rather old-fashioned, dresses, and their heads scarfed with bright silken kerchiefs. Then a gipsy brought champagne, and, after announcing that Masha would not be long in coming, and suggesting that the dance should begin without her, spoke to the conductor, a small, slim youth in a gold-braided coat who was tuning his guitar with one foot planted upon the windowsill.

The conductor replied angrily, and, on some of the elder women joining in, the conversation grew so loud as to merge into an angry altercation. The old women, with flushed faces, waved their arms about, and shrieked in piercing tones, whilst some even of the younger women, and of the men, grew excited. Constantly the word "Maka, Maka" kept occurring in the quarrel, but otherwise the cause of the disturbance remained wholly unintelligible. Only Steshka, a pretty young girl whom the conductor had introduced as the new leader of the choir, sat silent, and kept her eyes fixed upon the ground. The General, however, knew what was amiss. The gipsy who had brought the champagne had deceived the guests when he had said that Masha would not be long in

coming, and the other gipsies now were for Steshka taking the lead of the choir. But was she, or was she not, to receive 1½ shares?

"Hi, Chavaly!" the General cried. "Listen to me for a moment. Listen, I say."

But no one paid him the slightest attention. Until at length he enquired:

"Why not say outright that Masha is not coming at all?"

"You can take my word for it," the conductor replied, "that Steshka can sing just as well as she does. In fact, she sings 'Night' better than any other gipsy can do, for she has all Tanusha's manner." Then he added to the General, knowing that it would please him: "You at least know our people. Why not give Steshka a hearing?"

And some of the gipsy women, all talking at once, repeated the request.

"Very well, then. Right away."

"Which song should you prefer?" the conductor enquired, guitar in hand, as he took up a position in front of the already-seated semi-circle of gipsies.

"Begin at the beginning, of course! Start with 'Listen.' "

The gipsy raised his guitar, touched a chord, and the choir began:

" 'Dost hear the——?' "

"Stop! Stop!" the General shouted. "We are not yet ready. First we must have a drink!"

And all drank a glassful of the nasty, lukewarm

champagne. Then the General approached the gipsies, asked Lubasha (who had been pretty at about the time when he had been young) to give him her seat, and took her on to his knee. Then the choir began again—at first slowly, but, as gipsies always sing their songs, increasing the pace until to the voices' inimitable artistry there became added an extraordinary amount of energy. Suddenly the choir fell silent again. Then the opening chord was repeated, and this time a single sweet, tender, tuneful little voice repeated the original *motif* as a solo, whilst adding to it quaint turns and embellishments. Until, as the little voice grew stronger and fuller, it imperceptibly transferred the *motif* to the united choir once more.

There was a time when no music was as much thought of in Russia as was gipsy music—when gipsy choirs sang the good old Russian songs "Not alone," "Listen," "Youth," "Farewell," others. For in those days it was not considered strange to prefer gipsy music to Italian. But now gipsies sing to the public which assembles to listen to them in the arcades such purely vaudeville songs as "The Two Maidens," and "Vanka and Tanka." Strange indeed would it be if one could love present-day gipsy music. It is ludicrous to call their singing "music" at all, so pitifully has their art become degraded from the gipsy music of bygone Russia, which represented the transitional stage between folk song and the so-called classical style. How comes it that in Italy

every lazzarone can comprehend an aria by Rossini or Donizetti, whilst in Russia even members of the professional and lower middle classes are incapable of enjoying the music, they can appreciate only the stage effects, of "Askold's Grave" and "A life for the Czar"? I am not speaking of the Italian music which is comprehensible even to most Russian subscribers to opera. I have purposely chosen so-called *popular* operas. Every Russian should respond to gipsy music, for it has its roots in folk tunes. I may be told that gipsy music is bad, but, though no one need feel obliged to believe me, I can but speak of what I have experienced. Those who love gipsy music already will take my word for the truth of what I say, and those who will try gipsy music will then be able to verify my statement for themselves. At one time I loved gipsy music and German music equally, and studied both. And in those days a certain friend of mine, a splendid musician, a German by birth and by musical tradition, used frequently to assure me that gipsy choirs perpetrated the most unforgivable of musical crimes, and at last set out to prove his point. He agreed, as do many others, that the soli were splendid. Also, both he and I could set down music in notation fairly easily. Well, he made some gipsies sing us one particular song several times whilst we recorded its several voice parts. And, on subsequently comparing our respective records, we came upon several harmonic progressions in fifths! Well, I was not going to yield my point: I argued

that though the notes might have been put down correctly, we had not caught also their *tempo,* and that the fifths to which he had called my attention might only be "false" fifths, something in the nature of a very skilfully executed fugal passage. So we wrote down what we heard once more, and this time my German friend became convinced that I was right. Let me point out also that whenever variations in a passage occurred the harmonic progression remained the same—all that happened was that a given chord might be made fuller, or for a given note there might cleverly be substituted a repetition of a preceding phrase. But always we found it impossible to make the gipsies sing their parts separately. If we tried they merely sang the treble part. Only when the whole choir began singing again did each improvise his part as before.

I would ask those of my readers who are not interested in gipsy music to forgive this digression. It is out of place, I know, but my love for the *genre,* which is based upon our national melodies, and has never failed to give me pleasure, has triumphed over all other considerations.

During the first stanza the General listened attentively, and at times smiled, and closed his eyes. But presently he frowned and shook his head, and then became frankly bored, and entered into conversation with Lubasha, who replied with smiles calculated to display her pearly teeth, or joined the singing in a sonorous alto—glancing to right and left at the other

gipsies as she did so, and gesticulating with her hands.

The Guardsman, for his part, had seated himself beside Steshka, and, addressing Kornakov, taken to reiterating, "Charmant! Delicieux!" Occasionally, too, he made shift to join his voice to Steshka's, but the results were such that the other gipsy girls began to exchange angry whispers, and one of them even went so far as to touch his hand, and say, "Please stop, sir!"

Prince Kornakov lay curled up on his couch, and talked with Malashka, the pretty dancer, in an undertone, whilst Sereja, his jacket thrown open, stood posted before the singers, and seemed to be entranced with their performance, though also he was by no means unaware that the younger girls were looking at him, and smilingly whispering to one another—not laughing at him, but admiring him. Until at length he began to feel that really he must be good-looking. Suddenly, however, the General rose, and said to the Prince: "Non, cela ne va pas. Sans Mashka, le choeur ne vaut rien. N'est-ce pas?" and the Prince, who had seemed drowsy and apathetic ever since leaving the ball, agreed: so the General paid the score, and added to the payment a request for no parting chorus.

"Partons."

To which, with a yawn, the Prince responded:

"Partons!"

And then, as only the Guardsman had an objection

to make, and no one heeded him, all donned great-coats, and went out.

XI

Whose Fault Is It?

"I am not going to bed yet, though," said the General as he offered Sereja a seat in his carriage. "Allons à la——"

"Ich mache alles mit," Kornakov responded, and once more the two carriages and the sleigh went rolling through the dark and silent streets. Only then did Sereja realise how giddy he was. He leaned his head back upon the soft cushions of the vehicle, and attempted to collect his wandering thoughts without paying any attention to the General, who was saying in a voice as sober and steady as ever:

"Si ma femme savait que je bamboche avec vous!"

When the carriage stopped Sereja, the General, Prince Kornakov, and the Guardsman mounted a comparatively clean staircase to a clean hall where a footman removed their overcoats before ushering them into a brilliantly lit, but oddly, pretentiously furnished, room. There a band was playing, men and women were dancing, and others, in evening dress, were sitting against the walls. When our friends passed through to another room some ladies followed them, and champagne was brought. At

first his friends' manner with these ladies surprised Sereja, as also did the strange language, not unlike German, in which the ladies spoke to one another; but he drank several glassfuls of wine. Then the Prince called to him to come and join him where he was sitting on a sofa with one of the ladies mentioned; and when Sereja complied he stood amazed, less with the lady's beauty (though she was extraordinarily beautiful) than with her resemblance to the Countess. Yes, she had the same eyes, and the same smile, even though their expression varied between over-shyness and insolence. And even the fact that presently Sereja found himself sitting beside this lady, and talking to her, left it difficult for him afterwards to recall the conversation: he could only remember that through his excited imagination there then flitted the poetic charm of the story of the "Dame aux Camelias," and that the Prince himself called her the "Dame aux Camelias," and said that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever met, save that her hands marred her perfection, and that the "Dame aux Camelias" remained silent all the time—merely smiled in a way which annoyed Sereja now that the wine had gone to his young, unseasoned head.

He remembered also that the Prince had whispered to her, and then joined a group which had gathered round the General and the Guardsman, and that the woman then took him by the hand, and that they left the room together.

An hour later the four comrades left the house. Sereja did not reply to Prince Kornakov's *adieux,* but entered his own carriage, and began to cry like a child as he recalled the feeling of innocent love which, only two short hours ago, had been filling his soul with enthusiasm and dim longings, and realised that the time for such love had passed never to return again. It was with shame and remorse that he was weeping.

Why was the General, who was seeing the Prince home, so pleased when he cried in jest: "Le pauvre a perdu son pucelage?"

"He has," the Prince said. "I love bringing good-looking people together."

Whose the fault? Sereja's because he had surrendered to the influence of persons whom he liked and the demands of nature? Guilty, of course; but who shall cast the first stone?

The Prince's and the General's fault, you say, for were they not men whose sole purpose in life was to do evil? Rather, had they not a use as tempters, that they might make good appear better still? No, the fault was society's, yours, for tolerating such men —and not only tolerating them, but choosing them as social leaders.

Yet who really was guilty?

Oh, the pity of it that two human beings so gracious, so born for one another, and so aware of the fact, should have become lost to true love! For though each of them might meet another, and love

again, what manner of love could that be? Better for them to spend all their lives in repentance than to dull that memory and let a non-innocent love replace the love once known for a single brief moment!

THE QUAIL

THE QUAIL[1]

Translated by C. J. Hogarth

"How good it is to be living in the world, and how fair that world is!" I told myself one day. "And how sordid men are, and how sorrily they appreciate the world!" I reflected. Which profound, but not new, sentiment of mine had its origin in the nature which I beheld around me, and especially in the joyous, resonant call of a quail from the long grass.

"Probably," I added, "the bird knows nothing, cares nothing, about who owns the land on which it is calling: it cares nothing whether the land belongs to a Russian, or whether it is the property of wild men of the hills. Never does it suspect that land is not common property, but supposes in its ignorance that land is meant for the benefit of all, in that a mere quail has flown hither with love and a song, and built itself a little green dwelling in a chosen spot, and gathered food for itself, and flitted awhile between herb and air and sky, and hatched its young. No, a quail knows no such ideas as rights and submission and authority: it knows but one authority,

[1] Written, apparently, in the early Eighteen-fifties.

the authority of nature, and bows to that authority in uncomplaining unconsciousness. Well, it may be that just because it is so ignorant it sends forth its note so blithely. Having no lacks, it also has no cares."

Yet stay, O quail! May you not be mistaken? May it not one day befall that, as you are running about in the long grass, a sudden horror will turn your beautiful eyes upward, and send them fearfully following the slow flight of a dusky hawk which has soared beneath a cloud to search for your nesting-place? And may not the creature's voracious gaze at length descry the very spot where you are crouching with wings instinctively, but vainly, outspread to hide the great heads and unfledged bodies of your little ones? Ah, quail, how in that hour you will tremble with fear—as all creatures do in the face of evil!

VARENKA

VARENKA [1]

Translated by Mrs. Lydia Turin

"We seem to have forgotten the children altogether," remarked Mother after dinner. "The holidays have nearly come to an end, and we have never taken them to the theatre. Bring me the Entertainments List. I wonder whether there is anything suitable on to-day."

At the moment Varenka, Nikolenka and Lisanka were playing Mermaids, with the three of them ensconced in an easy chair as they voyaged underseas to visit the Fairy. As a matter of fact, six persons were supposed, by pretence, to be taking part in the game: a Mother, a Father, and children called Evgenii, Etienne, Sasha, and Milashka. And now after supporting the rôle of Milashka, Lisanka was preparing to receive her guests as the Fairy—and meanwhile lending an attentive ear to the conversation of her elders.

"They are taking us to the theatre, Varenka," she said, and then resumed her interrupted occupation of

[1] The story of another little girl called Varenka, who grew up ever so quickly.

blowing and waving her hands, as an intimation that the submarine journey was still being continued.

"Who is taking us? Mummy?" inquired Nikolenka.

"Yes," was Varenka's reply.

The game now rather went to pieces—it took them a long time to reach the Fairy, for they were listening to Mother as she debated with Uncle whether they should be taken to the Circus, or to the Great Theatre to see "The Mermaid and the Fisherman."

"Go upstairs and dress," at length she said.

At once the game was at an end. Boat, sea, and Milashka disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. Not a trace of them was left.

"Do you mean us, Mummy?" Varenka, the eldest, enquired, quite aware though she was of the persons addressed. As for Nikolenka and Lisanka, they stood hanging in silence upon their mother's lips.

"Run upstairs. Be quick, now!"

The children raced away with a stamping of feet, and a shouting and a shrieking and a jostling.

Half an hour later they entered the drawing room sedately, with hands and faces scrubbed, and in crisp frocks and ribbons and jackets that they were afraid to crush.

Charming they looked—the little girls in their muslin frocks and pink ribbons, and the boy in his tiny starched shirt of grey silk and golden belt—the latter, however, alas, almost invisible to him.

"Do I look as pretty as Lisanka?" Varenka won-

dered. To make sure, she walked slowly to the looking glass, and took a peep at herself over its ledge. The little girl standing sideways before her certainly made a pretty enough picture.

"Lisanka, come and see how untidy *you* look!" then she said. Lisanka approached, and surveyed herself. Not a crease was to be seen anywhere. Varenka had only been making fun of her.

Next, Nikolenka joined them, and contemplated his golden belt. After which Nurse, who had been waiting at the door with muffs, entered, and drew Lisanka aside.

"Why, it's all creased again," she scolded as she smoothed out Lisanka's skirt. "You're scarcely fit to be seen!"

But this remark, too, Lisanka knew was not to be taken seriously.

Presently the governess entered in a rustling silk gown and scarlet ribbons.

"Oh, Mlle. Bissant, how nice you look in your crinoline!" was the children's chorus as they danced around her. So she too took a peep at the mirror, to make sure that that really was the case.

Mother took a long time to dress, and meanwhile the children managed to get in a game of "Doctors." But as this led to their creasing their clothes again, and becoming untidy, they were once more admonished, and informed that, as it was sheerly a matter of impossibility to keep them neat, they would have, after all, to remain at home. However, the children,

convinced that this threat would not be carried out, remained secretly as gay as before, though trying to look crestfallen.

And at last all were seated in the carriage, after that Mikhailo had tossed them over the threshold like rubber balls, and, in spite of the frost, Nurse had stood, bareheaded and in her working-gown, on the doorstep, and protested, first that Lisanka's hat was all awry, and then that Varenka must cover up her hands. Only Nikolenka, "the little gentleman," she said, was as he should be.

But when the theatre had been reached, and they started to thread its corridors, and saw a crowd of strangers hurrying to and fro, and Mother had to ask her way, and Mikhailo was found to be entirely ignorant of it, the children (not that they would admit the fact) began quite to feel alarmed, and Lisanka even went so far as to imagine that their doom was sealed, and they were lost, and would be set upon and kidnapped, so that this would be as much of the theatre as they would ever see. But just as she was on the verge of tears, and suffocating with terror (I know that she will never confess to this, but it is true, all the same), they reached their box, and a man with gold braid upon his uniform asked Mother for her ticket (though he himself had admitted her to the theatre only a moment before, and things began to take on a more pleasant and wonderful, even if still a rather terrifying, aspect. An orchestra was playing, and the light shed by some great golden candles was

very bright, and people, people, and people, and heads, heads, and heads were to be seen everywhere —people above them, and below them, and all around them, and looking almost as if they were real.

Mother motioned the children to go to the front of the box, and then took a seat behind them. And when the children began to look about them they saw that all those people below, and opposite, and around, were, after all, real people, for they were moving about. And there were children as well—children as actually children as themselves. Particularly did a little girl and a little boy behind a low partition in the vicinity attract their attention, for these two were as beautiful as fairy children—the little girl with curls that fell to her bare shoulders, and the little boy with hair equally long and curly over a velvet coat and golden buttons. Very handsome this boy was—handsomer even than Fedya and Steva; yes, handsomer even than Raevsky, so that he looked every inch a fairy boy. The fairy couple gazed at the newcomers, and the newcomers gazed at them, and whispered amongst themselves.

"But that is where you should look, children," said Mother as she pointed downwards and sideways. "That is where the stage is."

The children looked down, but what they saw did not altogether please them. Below them there were seated some musicians, black-showing creatures, with violins and trumpets, whilst just above the musicians was an expanse of plain, ugly deal boards like the

floor-boards of the children's country house, and on these boards some people in shirts and red caps were walking about, and a little girl in a short skirt and no pantalettes was balancing herself upon the tips of the toes of one foot, and raising the other foot above her head. This proceeding did not seem very nice, and the children began to feel that the little girl was to be pitied.

"And where is the stage?" Nikolenka enquired.

"There," Mother replied, scanning the little girl through her opera glasses, and pointing to her. The children bent their looks upon the little girl again. By this time she was skipping and twirling about, and the rest of the company were joining her in her skipping and dancing. Well, there was nothing amusing in that. However, behind the little girl there could be distinguished something that looked like the sea with a moon shining over it. And that was delightful.

"Can all those girls be real?" Lisanka asked. Somehow she was feeling afraid, and wanted to cry.

"Yes, of course they are real," Varenka replied. "Can't you see how that girl walks? Watch her when she goes behind the partition. It is quite plain that all of them are real!"

Lisanka felt hurt. "I can see," she said, "that the children who are sitting next to us are real: but about the others I am not so sure."

Varenka herself found the boxes, the candelabra, and her neighbours—the little boy and girl—more interesting than she did the stage.

Similarly were the little boy and girl watching their neighbours, though constantly reminded by their elders to pay attention to the dancers.

Then it was amusing to see everybody clapping their hands. And just before the end the proceedings became very merry indeed, for a lot of men armed with halberts came onto the stage and began to belabour each other, and there was a fire, and one of the men fell right through the floor! It was unfortunate that just at the same moment the curtain began to descend.

The children in the next box then rose and went out with the officer who had brought them.

"How hot it is!" Mother said as she also took her charges into the corridor, and began to walk up and down.

Lisanka clung to her, for she was afraid of getting lost. The other two, however, ran on ahead.

The officer likewise was walking in the corridor with the fairy children, and the two parties eyed one another whenever they met. So intent was their mutual gaze that they took no notice of where they were walking, and at length Lisanka, still staring at the fairy children, slipped and fell. But she did not cry; she only blushed and laughed. And upon that our own children and the fairy children all burst out laughing. And, laughing, the fairy children looked lovelier than ever.

"How pretty and pleased they seem—especially the little girl!" was Nikolenka's reflection; whilst

Lisanka and Varenka thought the same of the little boy.

"Quels charmants enfants!" was Mother's remark to the governess. And the remark must have been quite audible both to the officer and to his children. Yet in her heart Mother was thinking: "Yes, those children are nice enough, but mine are better still."

The children were alarmed and amazed at their mother's audacity in making the remark, yet somehow felt pleased as well.

The officer said the same to his children when they reached the other end of the corridor, and then added: "Why not go and make their acquaintance?"

"*You* can go if you like," the little girl said.

"*I* will. *I* don't mind," the little boy, however, declared as he looked up at the officer. "But what am I to say to them?"

"You might ask whether the little girl has hurt herself."

"Then I'll say that," was the little boy's manful resolve.

"And I too," now added the little girl.

So they went to meet the others, with the boy's eyes fixed upon the little girl who had stumbled. But though he stopped quite close to her, and even opened his mouth to address her, his courage suddenly failed him, and, blushing to his neck, he ran back to his father with his new boots creaking at every step, and clutched the father's hand.

"Oh, you have disgraced yourself!" the latter said.

But the next time that the children came face to face the boy stopped in front of Lisanka, and she also stopped.

"What is your name?" she asked him.

"Sasha."

"Sasha?" Nikolenka, Varenka and Lisanka all exclaimed, and then laughed.

"It is because we have a game with a Sasha in it," Nikolenka explained.

"And *we* have a game called *volants*," the fairy girl volunteered.

"And is this your first visit to a theatre?" Varenka went on.

"Oh, no! We have been to see 'The Corsair,' and to the Circus twice, where there were some clowns, and to see 'The Magic Flute.' Yes, and granny is taking us to the theatre again the day after to-morrow."

Varenka felt humiliated by this.

"I suppose 'The Magic Flute' is very nice?" she said.

"Oh, no! The Circus is the finest thing in the world!"

"Can you speak French?"

"Yes, and German as well. And now we are learning to speak English."

"What is your name?"

By this time there were fewer people in the cor-

ridor, and Mother had taken her place in the box again, and the band had struck up. Yet still the children remained absorbed in their conversation.

"Now that you have made each other's acquaintance it is time that you went back to the box," the governess said.

"Say good-bye nicely, and kiss each other," the officer added with a smile.

So the children kissed, but Varenka had not quite time to kiss the fairy boy, and this vexed her. Upon their return to the box the two parties of children paid little attention to the ballet, but gazed at one another as before, save that now they exchanged smiles like old friends. Yet also they were feeling depressed, because their governess had just rebuked them for crushing their frocks. As if that mattered now that they were in the theatre itself!

The children had a second meeting during the next interval, and walked about hand in hand, and told each other everything they could think of. And the officer bought them grapes, and they soiled their gloves whilst they were eating them.

"When shall we meet again?" Varenka enquired.

"At the theatre, perhaps," said the boy. "Or you might even come and see us."

"We might—if Mother does not mind. When we grow up we shall do as we like, and visit you as often as we like."

"Yes, do come and see us then. We have got a beautiful large drawing room to play in."

"Do you know, someone told me the other day what one should do to grow up. I tried it, but couldn't quite manage it. You should pull a hair out of your head, and then tie it, or twist it, round your neck. And if you can keep it on all night, you'll be grown-up in the morning."

The children now felt happy—happier than they had ever felt before.

"We shall be friends always," the boy said to Varenka as he was taking his leave.

"Yes, always!" Varenka repeated.

And Nikolenka said the same to the fairy girl, and Lisanka repeated his words.

"All of us will always be friends," was Sasha's concluding assertion.

And they felt very pleased.

Uncle came to have tea with Mother after the theatre, and the children told him and Nurse all that they had seen, but dwelt even more upon the meeting with the other children than upon the performance.

Mother was not feeling very well. The play had only wearied her.

"Were they nice children?" Uncle asked Lisanka.

"Yes. *Ever* so nice!"

"And you became friends?"

"We became the greatest possible friends."

"And did they like *you?*"

"Oh yes, indeed! They *did!*

"But you have scarcely cut your teeth?"

"One can like people even without any teeth at all."

"*Teeth* don't matter!" Varenka corroborated.

"They have quite fallen in love with each other," the governess said.

"Yes, I am in love!" Varenka agreed, and began to laugh.

"Really, darling!" Mother exclaimed. "Then do you propose to marry him?" Varenka, thus heartened, replied that she did.

"But you can't do such a thing until you are grown-up," Lisanka objected. "You can't marry him *now*."

"No, of course not!"

"You babies, it is time you were in bed."

So the children signed the Sign of the Cross over their mother, and she made the same Sign over them, and then they kissed everyone, and ran upstairs.

Whilst they were taking off their frocks, and even whilst they were saying their prayers, the children still thought and talked of the fairy children.

In fact, Nurse had the greatest difficulty in getting them to be quiet at all, for they would chatter even after they had been tucked into their little beds. But at last they did become silent.

So Nurse trimmed the lamp before the ikon, and departed.

"Nikolenka!" then cried Varenka as she peeped through the curtains of her bed in the dim lamplight, with her little nightgown slipping from her shoulders.

Nikolenka scrambled to his knees.

"I should like to have a dream about Sasha," Varenka said.

"And I one about Masha," Nikolenka replied.

"I should like to have a dream about both," Lisanka piped.

"I shall have to go and tell your mother presently," Nurse said at this point from behind the door.

So the children became silent again.

"Yes, a dream about both of them would be the nicest," Varenka at length whispered to her pillow. For she could see Sasha again with his dark hair, and hear his merry laughter. "If only I were grown-up now I would marry him straight off."

And as she recalled the conversation about the hair she propped herself up on her elbow, and tugged at her own curls. But she took too large a handful of them, and cried out with the pain.

"What is the matter, Varenka?" Nikolenka murmured.

"Nothing. Good night!" was her reply.

"Good night!"

Two hairs had clung to Varenka's fingers. She took the longer of the two, and tried to put it round her neck. It was too short; so she tied the two together, twisted them into place, and laid her head down upon the pillow again.

"Lisanka and Nikolenka will have to remain little," she thought, and fear struck at her heart. "But I can do the same thing for them, and then we

will take Sasha into our house, and all live together." This comforted her, and she at once fell asleep. Suddenly, though, she became aware that she was growing larger and larger, and her bed becoming too small for her. Lisanka and Nikolenka were still asleep. She awoke, and looked about her. She was now quite grown-up! Quietly she rose, left the house, and hastened to Sasha's home. He was still asleep. She approached his bed, and saw that the hair which encircled his neck had almost slipped off. Gently she patted it back into place. At once he too began to grow larger and larger, and taller and taller, so that his bed creaked under him, with arms and legs muscular and thick, and a moustache showing on his upper lip. At last he opened his eyes, and stared at Varenka.

"What a surprise this is!" he said—then stretched himself. And now Varenka began to feel shy and afraid, for Sasha's eyes and smile had such a strange look about them. With everything turning black before her eyes, she screamed, and fell forward. But when, by degrees, she recovered from her fright, and opened her eyes, it was her own bed in the lamplight that she beheld, whilst Nurse, with her head wrapped in a shawl, was standing beside her, and signing her with the Sign of the Cross. Varenka tore off the hair, turned over on her side, and fell asleep again.

THE DREAM

THE DREAM[1]

Translated by C. J. Hogarth

STANDING, in a dream, on a white peak which seemed to be wavering to and fro, I was proclaiming to all mankind what was in my soul, but had never before become known to me. And as I spoke my ideas seemed to be strange with the strangeness of a dream, yet also, insensibly, to vest themselves in ordered and inspired language. And what I said surprised myself, but all the time I gloried in the sound of my own voice. Meanwhile I could see nothing; I could only feel that around me there was a multitude of people whom I knew not, yet recognised as my brothers. They were breathing close beside me, these people were, and, far away, an ocean was soughing even as the people breathed. And whenever I spoke, that which I spoke seemed to send a mighty wind rushing through a forest, and to arouse both the people and myself to greater and greater fervour. Then for a while I ceased speaking. Yet still the soughing of the ocean remained. For the

[1] Written at the close of 1857, and re-cast during the years 1861–62.

multitude was both the ocean and the forest. Also, though I could see nothing, all could see me—I could feel that all men's gaze was upon me. And I could not have borne that gaze had it not been that the gaze itself upheld me. Thus I felt at once oppressed and joyful. The multitude stirred me even as I stirred the multitude. I could feel its influence upon me, and my own influence over it was unbounded.

Yes, I was the voice that was speaking within me. Further and further I travelled—swifter and swifter, until I could scarce draw my breath. And meanwhile a repressed sense of awe increased, rather than lessened, my rapture as the eminence on which I was standing rocked ever to and fro, and raised me ever higher and higher. Then suddenly, just when, I knew, I should need to rise but a little further for all to be accomplished, I heard footsteps behind me, and felt fall upon me a strange, free glance. And, despite myself (for it had to be so), I turned and looked backward. A woman was behind me, and I became abashed, and fell silent. Yet the multitude did not disperse, and the mighty wind continued to blow over it.

Calmly the woman passed through the multitude, though it did not divide before her, nor did she become one with it. And when, still abashed, I sought to turn away and speak again, the words would come to me no longer, and I could not make them do so. Yet I knew not who the woman was. I did but divine that she had within her all that men love, and that

with a bitter-sweet power she could draw all men to herself. Then she looked at me through the multitude—but only for an instant before turning away with indifference. Yet though I could see the lines of her face but dimly, the look, the calm look, that had touched me remained. That look had in it at once gentle ridicule and faint regret. Not that she had understood my words, or wished to understand them. It was merely that—she was sorry for me. I could not wrest from me her glance, the glance that was not despising me, but, having beheld our rapture, was regretting it. She herself was happiness throughout, and had need of none. For which very reason I felt, all at once, that I could not live without her. . . . A tremulous mist hid her from my sight. I burst into tears, and, casting away shame, wept for the irrecoverable happiness of the past, and for the impossibility of happiness in the future. . . . And in those tears lay the happiness of the present.

HOW RUSSIAN SOLDIERS DIE

HOW RUSSIAN SOLDIERS DIE[1]

Translated by C. J. Hogarth

In the year 1853 I spent a few days in the fort at Chakhgiri, one of the most picturesque, but also one of the most disturbed, spots in the Caucasus; and on the evening of the day after my arrival, when I and my host were sitting on the terrace in front of his hut as we waited for tea, we were joined by our mutual friend Captain N.

The season was summer time, but the heat lessening with evening. Along the horizon summer clouds were trailing, and the mountains had grown clearer, and swifts were describing gay circles overhead. In front of us two cherry trees and a monotonous row of sunflowers were casting long shadows upon the path, and the garden's two *arshini* of space had about them an air of snugness and quiet.

Suddenly the boom of a cannon shot came to us on the breeze.

"What is that?" I asked.

"I do not know. I expect it is the watch tower. But can it mean the alarm?"

[1] Written during the April of 1858, and originally entitled "The Alarm."

A Cossack galloped away down the street, a foot soldier shuffled across the street with a stumping of heavy boots, and in a building near by a clatter and commotion arose. My friend and I approached the palisade. "What is up?" we asked of an officer's servant in striped breeches sustained with a single brace who was hurrying past, and scratching his back as he went.

"The alarm," he replied without halting. "I must go and look for my master."

Captain N. returned for his cap, buttoned himself up, and hurried off to his quarters, for that day his company was the duty company. A second and a third shot came from the watch tower.

"Shall we go and reconnoitre from the postern?" my friend suggested. "There must be something on at the watering-place." And he added to his servant: "Do not put out the samovar. We shall be back presently."

Everywhere people were bustling along the street —here a Cossack, and there a mounted officer, and there a soldier, musket in one hand, and tunic in the other. From gateways and windows and open doors frightened faces of Jews and women were peeping.

"Where is the alarm?" asked someone in a panting voice. "Where?"

"Over the bridge," replied another. "The fellows have been for driving off our artillery horses. And a large party too. There's going to be trouble this time."

"Oo-a-a-ay!" came a woman's tearful voice. "Why, they'll be getting into the fort itself!"

"Well, and wouldn't you like to make another wife for Shamil?" a young soldier in blue overalls and cap cocked awry asked with a wink.

Just as we reached the postern we were overtaken by the duty company as, haversacks a-shoulder, and muskets at the trail, it made for the mountains—our friend, Captain N., riding at its head.

"Peter Ivanovitch!" my host shouted, "Good luck to you!" But the Captain did not see us, for he was gazing ahead with a sort of strained expression, and his eyes glittering more brightly than usual. Behind the company came the surgeon with his leather hold-all, and then the stretcher-bearers. When I beheld these last I understood the Captain's expression.

Always it is an inspiring thing to see men confronting death without fear. In this fort there were hundreds of men ready hourly, at any moment, to meet their end without a tremor. Nay, a greater thing yet, they were ready to meet their end without braggadocio or evasion—just simply, unostentatiously.

When the company had almost covered half the distance to the mountains there came running out to the postern a freckled soldier with a sunburnt face over a white neck, a single ear-ring, a musket in one hand, and a haversack in the other. Just as he reached us he stumbled and fell, and some of the onlookers laughed.

"Hi, Antonitch!" called out a soldier in blue

trousers—evidently something of a wag. "It's bad luck to fall like that."

The newcomer halted, and turned upon the speaker. All in a moment had his worn, anxious face taken on an expression of the keenest possible resentment.

"You're a fool yourself, and the worst sort of fool!" was his contemptuous retort. "If ever there was a blockhead, *you're* one!" And he resumed his way.

The air was clear and still. Wisps of vapour were floating, as usual, over the mountain clefts, but the sky was clean-swept save for the two black specks of sinuously circling eagles. Beyond the silver ribbon of the Argun the brickwork tower which was our only holding in Great Chechenia was standing up distinctly. At a little distance from it a party of mounted Chechenians were urging the looted horses towards the mountains' steep slopes, and exchanging shots with the tower's late garrison.

Even when the company had crossed the bridge, the Chechenians were still out of musket range, but a puff of smoke showed from amongst our men, and then another one, and then a third, until the whole line was sending forth a fusillade. Some fifty seconds later, when the crackling sounds reached our own ears, general jubilation arose, and laughter, and cries of encouragement.

"See our company!" the crowd shouted. "Aye, and see the other fellows running! They're off,

they're off—they're taking to their heels already!"

"If only our men can cut them off from the mountains, there'll be no escape for them," the wag in the blue trousers added by way of calling general attention to himself.

True enough, the fusillade had set the Chechenians galloping for the mountain spurs, with a few detached horsemen lingering behind—partly out of bravado, and partly to exchange shots with our men. It was absolutely vexing to watch a black-cloaked Chechenian on a white horse who would venture to within what looked like fifty yards of our men, and then, despite the continuous firing, pull his horse to a walk just in front of the line, and then, amidst bluish puffs from our company, and with the cutting sounds of leaden bullets meeting our ears, once more put his horse to a gallop, and once more rein it in to a walk.

"Ah, the ragamuffin escapes every time!" bystanders could be heard saying. "He doesn't seem to know what fear is."

"He may learn yet, though," the wag remarked.

Suddenly there ascended a joyful chorus of "He's hit! He's hit! At all events *one* is! Good! They tried to drive off our horses, and now one of the devils is paying for it! Ah, my lad! You've played the fool once too often!"

Sure enough, a peculiar movement was evident amongst the Chechenians—a movement as of picking up a wounded comrade, whilst in front of their ranks there was careering a riderless steed. The crowd

attained ecstasies at the sight. It roared, and clapped its hands. Suddenly the hillmen disappeared behind a mountain spur. Only the company was left in view.

"Well, as the show is over," my friend remarked, "let us go back to tea."

Scarcely had he spoken when an elderly quartermaster who had been scanning the company from under his hand exclaimed:

"But one of our own fellows is hit! Anyway the company has got someone being carried on a stretcher."

So my host and I changed our minds, and decided to await the company's return. When it arrived with its commander riding at its head, two of the men were playing a lively, taking Cossack air behind him, and on the faces both of officer and men there was a conscious air of dignity and pride.

"Have you a cigarette about you?" he shouted to us as the company drew near. "I am dying for a smoke!"

"How did things go?" we asked in return.

"The devil take them and their horses!" he replied, lighting the cigarette. "However, we have only got Bondarchouk wounded."

"Who is Bondarchouk?"

"The saddler, the fellow whom I sent to mend your saddle."

"Oh, I know. The flaxen-haired man?"

"Yes, and a fine soldier as well. The company simply swore by him."

"But I hope the wound is not a bad one?"

"It is *here*." And N. pointed to his abdomen.

Just as he spoke the stretcher-bearers appeared from behind the company.

"Hold up my end, Filipitch," said one of them. "I want to get a drink."

The wounded man also asked for water, so the bearers halted, but all that we could see of the man over the rim of the stretcher was a pale forehead under an old cap, and a pair of raised knees.

Suddenly two women in the crowd burst out weeping, and then rough murmurs of sympathy became general, and, as they mingled with the groans of the wounded man, produced a painful and mournful impression.

Stepping forward, we looked at him. Why, he was the fair-haired soldier with the one ear-ring who had stumbled and fallen when he had been running to overtake his comrades! But his face now was very pale, and some years older of expression. Also, his eyes and the set of his lips had in them something peculiar which had not been there before. Yes, already the approach of death had stamped upon that simple face its calm, majestic beauty.

"How are you feeling now?" my friend asked.

"Not very well, sir," he replied with difficulty as he turned upon us a pair of clear, but drooping eyes.

"Well, may God send you a speedy recovery!"

"All of us have to die," was his reply as his eyes closed.

As the bearers moved forward the man sighed that he had something more to say, so we walked beside the stretcher.

"Sir"—this was to my host, "I bought some stirrups for your saddle, and they are under my bed. That was the last of your money."

Next morning we went round to the hospital to ask after him.

"Where is the soldier of No. 8 Company?"

"Whom do you mean, sir?" answered from the doorway a white-faced, lanky soldier with a bandaged hand.

"They must mean," put in a faint voice from a neighbouring cot, "the man who was brought here after last night's affair."

"Oh, he has been taken away."

"Did he say anything before he died?"

"Nothing, sir," replied the voice from the cot. "He just gave a gasp—that was all. You see, sir, he was lying next to me. The smell from him was almost past bearing." [1]

Great, great, indeed, is the destiny of the Slavonic race! Not for nothing has that race been given its strength of character, its vastness of simplicity, its unconsciousness of its own powers!

[1] A reference to the effects of an abdominal wound.

OASIS

OASIS [1]

Translated by Mrs. H. M. Lucas

"You knew her then before she was married?" I asked my uncle, when at last Anna Vasilievna Kortchagina had departed after inflicting on us, in the best part of the summer, the torture of a ten hours' visit from herself, her silent daughters, and her insufferable, loud-voiced husband. I had gone to see them off from the porch, and returning to the terrace to my uncle, I noticed that he was holding in his hand a cigar which had gone out, and that he was gazing with unseeing eyes and with a particularly tender and thoughtful expression into the dark green shade of the lime-walk with its blossom-strewn boughs.

The look in his eyes at this moment, at once lover-like and subdued, and the smile which wrinkled his lips under his grey moustache when he was exchanging reminiscences with Anna Vasilievna about some long-ago visit he had paid them in the country near Kazan, had aroused my suspicions that there was really something between them. It was, however, so

[1] This refers, apparently, to the second half of the Fifties. The exact date of composition has not been established.

strange to think that there could ever have been anything in the nature of love between my uncle, absorbed in politics, cards, and his official duties, and Anna Vasilievna—a woman whose style was bad and far from pleasing, who had, moreover, sticky hair and a wide parting, and whose one occupation was how to be "comme il faut"—that I could not believe my own suspicions.

"Why so?" he said in answer to my question, and again smiled a scarcely perceptible, but joyful, smile.

"Oh, nothing—I just asked."

"You think that she was always what she is now? She was perfectly charming, and I never loved anybody not only as much, but as well, as I loved her."

"What? Impossible!" I shrieked with such astonishment that he almost laughed outright.

"D'you think that only you have a right to love?"

"No, but seriously?"

"Quite seriously. In all our lives, but especially in my life—Sahara desert that it is, there have been oases. And this one was perhaps the best. Quite the best, I think."

His tone carried conviction. I was no longer astonished, but full of sympathy. I wanted to understand how these things could have been, but I was completely at a loss.

He gazed at me for a long time.

"Uncle, tell me how it happened."

"Very well, I'll tell you. Wait a bit, though. You've seen the portrait of me my brother has?"

"Yes, the one I betted was not you—and lost."

"Yes, but remember, please, that my coat was then the latest thing. Come now, give me your sash."

"It's big for me," I said, as I took it off. He measured off three quarters of it with his two fingers and put it round his own back. The end of the sash just showed at the edge of his stomach.

"Well, that was my waist measure," he said, "and I hadn't any of all this," and he touched his long, white whiskers with a well-shaped, sunburnt hand.

"Yes, in fact, you were as you say, but not my uncle but someone a thousand times less nice."

"Not so nice, maybe—but such I was. Well, I was still at the university——"

"No, now you tell me everything, everything, very, very nicely, so that I can understand. I can't imagine that you also let yourself be led astray."

"Very well then, here goes. I was sixteen, and after the hard work of preparing for my exam which was extremely uncongenial to me as a healthy, lively sixteen-year-old, I had gone on a visit to my uncle in the country.

"As I walked along in the clatter from the paving in the dusty streets burnt by the May sun, or on the boulevards where even the lime trees had caught the dust, I used to dream of the country, the real country where I had grown up, and I used to picture myself in the country as a full blown undergraduate, how I should have the right to ride when I wanted, to bathe, to go hunting, or to lie about in the garden

with a book, and not to do anything at all except what I wanted. This happiness seemed to me so great that I did not believe it possible, and I drove the thought away so as not to lose my last strength to work for my exam.

"The examinations with their ups and downs, so terrifying at the moment, and so soon forgotten—that doubtful mark for Latin!—were now over; I donned and doffed my student's uniform, said good-bye to my professor with whom I boarded, took the stage coach for the first time alone, and arrived at my uncle's. I soon noticed that I had expected too much, that everything was there which I had expected, but that here in the country I expected still more; and that what I had, failed to answer to my wishes to an even greater degree than it had before, when I was doing my exam.

"My uncle, a retired Guardsman, who had been educated by the Jesuits, a refined and clever old man (as it seemed to me then, he was really under fifty), received me very kindly, and gave me a nice little room in the wing. My uncle considered above all things outward appearances, cleanliness, elegance of dress, speech, and manners. With youth's special faculty for assuming protective colouring under the eyes of strangers, I immediately assumed what was pleasing to him, and he was entirely contented with me. I conversed with him and my aunt at lunch and dinner, and sometimes sat with them, and, feeling myself flattered that he attended to me as to a

grown-up person, I listened to his stories, his music, and his talk about music, and myself told stories to him. Sometimes he came to see me in my room, and was much pleased by the cleanliness and order in which I kept my quarters.

"I, too, was pleased by the external arrangement of my life. This was the first time that I had made my arrangements according to my own wishes, and that I lived by myself. In the morning I drank coffee in my own room. I got up early, bathed, and put on clean linen. The manservant meanwhile cleaned my room with extreme thoroughness (I was then extremely particular about cleanliness). I came back, set my things very neatly and elegantly at the window, and sat down with a book to drink my coffee. I read books of philosophy. For the first few days I enjoyed this. Soon, however, I used to break off from my book and look out of the window at the fir tree and the group of birches where, in former times, my uncle had kept a bear. The beauty of the birches, the fir tree, the curly grass, the light and shade, the flies, the dog lying curled up, began to fill me with such emotion that I confessed to myself that all this tidiness, cleanliness, freedom, and philosophy was not what I wanted, that I needed something else to satisfy my desires. I imagined how my uncle used to live in the old days when he was young, how I myself would live in time to come, and my soul was filled with agitation, and I thought, 'What am I to do so as not to let slip the time for enjoying myself as I should?'

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The bear? Hunting? Yes, I must hunt. I made friends with Simeon the gardener, and we got up before it was light, and went hunting.

"This was all wonderful—the early morning, the dew which wet our feet, the depths of the forest, the morning mists, and our bathing in the lake; but not so much because the season was not good for hunting, and we killed nothing, as because these hunting expeditions roused in me still stronger unsatisfied desires. Fenimore Cooper, the Pathfinder, American virgin forests, possible grand scale operations in these forests came into my mind. All the present was not what I wanted, and only irritated me and filled me with dejection. The same thing happened with fishing, riding, music which I had begun to learn again, and visiting expeditions to the neighbours on which my uncle took me. I began with enthusiasm, but immediately became convinced that it was not what I wanted, and gave it up again.

"I was free, and young, and healthy, I was happy, if one could call it happiness, but in my soul lived melancholy longing, the poetic, youthful melancholy of idleness, and the vain expectation of a great happiness which did not come.

" 'Why was Anna Silovna being so frightfully forthcoming just now?' my uncle said to his wife when we were on our way back from church on Trinity Sunday. 'She said she was coming over with her daughter.'

" 'You saw her daughter?' he asked me. 'She is

from the Smolny. Elle est gentille. Don't you think so?'

"I blushed, as I always blushed when people talked to me of women. Of women I knew only that they were dangerous, and I was afraid of them.

" 'Yes, apparently.' I answered sincerely because several times during the service I had felt that I could not breathe because my heart was beating so fast, and every time, looking round, I had met the eye of Anna Silovna's daughter. I did not know whether she was pretty or plain, because each time her face had appeared to me in an aureole of, to me, unattainable bliss. I did not believe that she was looking at me. I was apparently in the field of her vision.

"I remember only something delicate and airy, and the tender and affectionate glance of the half-closed eyes, and I remember, in the neighbourhood of this glance, a shining of hair, and a white neck.

" 'Yes, very,' I answered.

" 'Well, it looks as if it were on your account she was so forthcoming. Faites lui la cour. There's occupation for you.'

" 'Oh, but Vladimar Ivanovich, she's engaged,' said my aunt.

" 'Well, he won't make her break it off! Whom are they marrying her to?'

" 'To the son of Ivan Theodorovich.'

" 'The engineer. Well then, get it broken off, I give my permission.'

"The conversation then ended. It did not please me, however. How could my uncle laugh at what was so serious to me? It was serious to me because I knew that all men, even young men, were in love, and were loved in return, but of myself I could never dare to think that I could ever be loved. When I had fallen in love for the first time with Zina Kobeleva, she had only laughed at me; and therefore I had long ago made up my mind that I would never fall in love again, so as to save myself from such torture, and that I would try to live without it. And now my uncle, in lightness of heart, in joke, had torn open my wound. And who was it he had been talking about? About the celestial vision which had appeared to me in church. How could I dare to think of it? But he made me think of it, and I suffered.

"'If they come, I shall be out—purposely—with my gun. Better, anyhow, for her to guess that I avoided her purposely, and perhaps she will be sorry.'

"But I did not succeed in carrying out my plans. After lunch I went for a walk with Trésor, and lay down on the grass, and was tying knots in the stalks, and dreaming of how I would play the piano, and how—since I would not play before anyone—I would hire my manservant to listen to my fantasias at night. I already heard these fantasias, and was beating out the bars with my left hand when Trésor came up to me, and licked my nose. I took him by the paws and

began to play fantasias with them, when suddenly a carriage drove out of the wood, and undoubtedly *she* was laughing and pointing at me. I got up, and took off my hat. They drove past, and she smiled. I had expected everything wonderful from her, but not this charming, tender, affectionate, fraternal and mocking smile. No, I won't go hunting, and if they send for me, I will put on my new coat and go into the house. I shall say that dogs are decidedly more intelligent than we think.

"I went along, thinking, and all the time smiling with the same smile as hers. Their coachman was standing and looking at me. What a nice man he was. What an old carriage, much patched up, but what a dear, sweet old carriage. What horses with plaited manes. The right hand horse, a bay with crooked forelegs, was shaking its head to keep off the flies. Only she could have such horses. I never again have beheld any like them, horses entirely apart, new, expressing in their aspect happiness, joy, and the promise of bliss. In the smell of sweat from the horses there was also some new and blissful meaning.

"The servant Pavel came smiling with a message from my uncle. I was to go and help entertain the ladies.

"I understood that it would be possible to entertain Anna Silovna and another who had been sitting in front—a ward and godchild of Anna Silovna's, it seems—but no one could entertain HER. She could

sit eternally smiling, and nothing else would be needful, and everyone would be perfectly happy. . . .

"It was difficult for me to go into the room where they were sitting on the seat by the piano, difficult, and it made me feel abashed, as a ragged beggar is abashed to take his rags into a brightly lit, brilliant ballroom. It was shameful and painful to me to shew my insignificance in the bright light with which she illuminated everything round her. But I went in. Everything was beaming, and I had scarcely gone in and taken her hand when my timidity had already gone. They were all beaming—my aunt, Alena Silovna, the ward, and especially my uncle who liked pretty women. He evidently had already begun to pay court to her. . . ."

THE NIHILIST

THE NIHILIST[1]

Translated by Mrs. H. M. Lucas

A Comedy in Three Acts

CHARACTERS

Glaphira Theodorovna, an old lady.
Thiona Andreevna, her companion.
Simeon Ivanich, son of Glaphira Theodorovna, a landed proprietor, aged 40.
Maria Dmitrievna, his young wife.
Lyouba, her sister.
Natalia Pavlovna, a friend of Lyouba's.
Nikolinka, a schoolboy nephew of Simeon Ivanich.
Chrisanth Vasilievich, a student, a nihilist, Nikolinka's tutor.

(The action takes place at Simeon Ivanich's place.)

[1] This farce was written in the autumn of 1863, for private theatricals at Yasnaya Polyana.

ACT I

Scene 1

[Glaphira Theodorovna, Thiona Andreevna, Simeon Ivanich. At the tea table.]

Gla. Theo. Senya, there you have gone and invited guests, and I do not see the sense of it. If they had been orderly people it would have been nice, but the Lord knows who they are. Yesterday they broke into the store room, rummaged through everything, there is some plan on there. Now there is such a *trouble* with the servants. Oh, these young people are too much for me.

Thio. Andre. And,—my dear fellow, nowadays people do not invite guests. Would you like to hear what happened at the Jivotovskis, at Zolotoukin? The coachman climbed into the window.

Sim. Ivan. It is not a question of coachmen, Thiona Andreevna. Why, mama, should the young people not be merry? One thing surprises me, where have they all got to?

Gla. Theo. Yes, my friend, you think of their pleasure, but they have lost all respect for their elders. It is your name day, and up to now no one has congratulated you.

Thio. Andre. The genenists [1] have brought in new ways. One has to give drink and food to everybody.

Sim. Ivan. Yes, and there are a great many of them. Why, mama dear, do you make such a fuss? One must have one's nephew for the holidays, well then, his tutor, a student, comes with him.

Gla. Theo. Oh, my dear fellow, it can't be. . . .

Thio. Andre. My dears, my dears!

Sim. Ivan. Then they let my sister-in-law come from the Institute, and her friend with her, a very charming young lady.

Gla. Theo. These friends, they'll give you what for.

Thio. Andre. Yes, they'll give you what for.

Sim. Ivan. What?

Gla. Theo. Nothing.

Thio. Andre. Nothing, my dear sir, please pass the sugar.

Scene 2

[The same; Maria Dmitrievna enters and stands at the door.]

Sim. Ivan. Ah, there she is.

Mar. Dmi. [At the door] Look, don't forget.

[1] Translator's note. Mispronunciation of Nihilists.

[Goes up to all in turn, and kisses her husband] How do you do, dear, I congratulate you. How do you do, maman, I congratulate you on your son's name day. Thiona Andreevna, my respects.

Gla. Theo. At present, it seems, ma chère, that it is a happy day for us.

Mar. Dmi. I know, I know very well. [Kisses her husband]

Sim. Ivan. Have you seen where they all are? Where is Lyouba, and all the young people?

Mar. Dmi. Seen . . . ah, no, I have not seen them.

Gla. Theo. What a business it used to be in our times, when my poor dear Ivan Zakharich spent his name day. You got up before it was light, examined everything, got ready various surprises, bouquets, someone learnt some verses, my sister once learnt a song on the piano. . . .

Thio. Andre. And do you remember how they acted a comedy, "The String"?

Gla. Theo. What string?

Thio. Andre. That was the title.

Gla. Theo. My poor dear comes in, there are congratulations . . . even for an outsider it was touching to see. It is not like that with you.

Thio. Andre. I cannot remember it without crying. Then name days were name days . . . not what they are at the present time. Seeing their love, you wept. [Weeps]

Mar Dmi. Is that what it was like, maman? Is it not so good now?

Gla. Theo. Yes, my dear, it is not so good.

Scene 3

[The same. Natalia Pavlovna, Lyouba, and the student run in.]

Lyouba. Good morning, Glaphira Theodorovna! I have the honour of congratulating you on your son's name day. Good morning, Simeon Ivanich! I congratulate you.

Nat. Pav. [Mincingly, curtsies] Bonjour, madame, je vous félicite, et vous, monsieur, aussi.

Lyouba. [Cheerfully] What are you crying for, Thiona Andreevna? [Goes to the side]

Chris. Vas. [To Masha, softly] Look, he has got it.

Mar. Dmi. [Also softly] Good, very good.

Sim. Ivan. What? [General silence]

Chris. Vas. [To Sim. Ivan.] As it is usual to offer congratulations, I congratulate you.

Sim. Ivan. [To Mar. Dmi.] I thought you and Chrisanth Vasiliev had not met?

Mar. Dmi. [Very confused] No . . . yes . . . no, we have not met. Good morning.

Chris. Vas. [Bowing] No, we have not yet met. [To the companion] Why are you so upset, Thiona Andreevna? At the present age of

progress, it has been shown that tears are only a function of the organism.

Thio. Andre. That will do, with your surganism. I myself can use bad words like that, and I've seen better people than you. [Turns away]

Gla. Theo. I am very glad, mes chers amis, that you have come to pay a visit to my son; I only fear lest you should be bored with us old folk. Today there has not been time for that. Et vous, ma chère, avez vous terminé vos études? [Turns to Natasha]

Nat. Pav. Non, madame, pas encore. [Lyouba holds her behind by her dress] It's no good, they know.

Mar. Dmi. Ah, how hot it is here! [Goes to the young people] Heaven send that he did not see. [Silence]

Gla. Theo. However, how quickly your wife has got on with these guests.

Sim. Ivan. What?

Thio. Andre. She is very sociable.

Scene 4

[The same. Nikolinka runs in.]

Nikolinka. [Runs in] I congratulate you on your son's name day, Glaphira Theodorovna, and you, uncle. [Makes a comic bow to Thiona Andreevna and goes off to the young people. They whisper together, and all run off]

Sim. Ivan. [Following them] Masha, Masha!

Scene 5

[Glaphira Theodorovna, Thiona Andreevna, and Simeon Ivanich.]

Gla. Theo. Yes, my friends, nowadays youth looks at these things in its own way. I will not say that there is a great difference in your ages, but all the same, she might show more attention. It's sad, very sad.

Thio. Andre. They ran off just as if they were going to a fire.

Sim. Ivan. [With feeling] You keep quiet! [Thio. Andre. gets up, terrified.]

Gla. Theo. Oh, my dear, how you shriek! Your wife ran off with this student instead of sitting with her husband, but it is her fault that you are jealous of this boy.

Sim. Ivan. [Getting up] Oh, maman, what are you saying? What do you mean? Could I fall so low as to be jealous? The very word is repulsive to me. [Thumps violently with his fist on the table] And allow me to say that if you want to make me quarrel with my wife. . .

Gla. Theo. Oh, my dear fellow, Heaven help you, don't shout at me. You invited God knows whom, and it is my fault. Let us go, Thiona Andreevna, I see that we are in the way.

Thio. Andre. In the way, in the way. [Exeunt]

Scene 6

Sim. Ivan. [Alone] To be jealous—not to be jealous, that is nonsense. But it is strange, very strange. What are these oglings and whisperings? . . . She ran off . . . and all of them, these silly girls, are delighted with this bony Chrisanth, whoever he is. That is the rule. The girls flirt, and she follows suit. But girls! It is incomprehensible; all the same, what do these secret smiles and glances mean? Oh, how annoying it is. No, not annoying, but frightful, yes, frightful. . . . Oh, women, women! [Exit]

ACT II

Scene 1

[Maria Dmitrievna, Lyouba, Natalia Pavlovna, and Nikolinka are looking at a transparency. The room is in disorder, with paper, starch, and costumes.]

Mar. Dmi. Chrisanth has managed excellently, excellently; God has sent us this Chrisanth.

Nat. Pav. [Laughs] Oh, Maria Dmitrievna, how

he has got on my nerves! Just think, he had the idea of paying court to me, he talks of some kind of rational love, repellent fellow.

Lyouba. It is not true, Masha, she is very pleased. She flirts with him herself.

Nat. Pav. I? Still that nonsense! No, Maria Dmitrievna, it is she who has been flirting with him. She was talking about emancipation.

Lyouba. No, it was you.

Nat. Pav. [Hurt] Excuse me, I did not at all.

Lyouba. No, it was you.

Nat. Pav. [In the same tone] I beg you, it was not I.

Lyouba. No, it was you.

Mar. Dmi. That's enough quarrelling. It's time to get to business. We have not yet finished the S.

Lyouba. No, Masha, I can't do it, we must send for Chrisanth Vasilievich.

Nat. Pav. Nicholas, run for him quickly. [Nikolinka runs off]

Scene 2

[The same without Nikolinka.]

Nat. Pav. [Goes up to Masha in a lively way] Maria Dmitrievna, when he works, he takes his coat off, you allow him to, notice what kind of chintz shirt he has got.

Scene 3

[The same. The student and Nikolinka come in.]

Mar. Dmi. Are the verses ready?

Lyouba. Blacken the transparency with soot, for I should make my hands black.

Nat. Pav. What about the lanterns?

Chris. Vas. [Stops in the doorway] There's the equality of women! Only God above can be omnipresent. I can't be *everywhere* at once. No, I told you, Natalia Pavlovna, that our women are still very far from understanding rational love.

Lyouba. It is not a question of love, smear it with soot.

Mar. Dmi. Take off your coat.

Nat. Pav. Glue the lanterns.

Chris. Vas. By your leave. [Takes off his coat]

Mar. Dmi. Do me the favour. Nikolinka, go to the porch, and if any one comes, run and tell us.

Nikolinka. Be calm, I won't let a tom cat or a tabby cat come by. [Runs off]

Scene 4

[The same without Nikolinka. They all turn their attention to the student's shirt.]

Nat. Pav. [Scoffing] Lilac coloured!

Mar. Dmi. [ditto] Dirty!

Lyouba. With little blue flowers!

Chris. Vas. What? What?

Lyouba. Nothing, I only said that little blue flowers would go very well on the lanterns.

Chris. Vas. I did not ask for your assistance, ladies and gentlemen.

Nat. Pav. Very well, I will glue. [Glues a star on his shirt]

Lyouba. [Paints his shirt collar] And I will paint.

Mar. Dmi. Well, what about the verses?

Chris. Vas. Allow me a minute's inspiration, Maria Dmitrievna. [Puts his hands over his hair and blackens his forehead with soot]

Nat. Pav. and *Lyouba.* [Together] More, more inspiration!

Chris. Vas. [Smears his face again, not noticing it] Allow me. [Goes to one side and poses himself] Congratulations on your name day, no, that is not good. . .

Nikolinka [Runs in] He is coming, he is coming!

Mar. Dmi. Who is coming?

Nikolinka. Nikolai, the cook.

Lyouba. Oh, you fool!

Mar. Dmi. The cook doesn't matter, but if any of our own people come.

Chris. Vas. Excuse me, excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, you have smeared me and glued things on to me. Twice, Natalia Pavlovna, and still no verses.

Mar. Dmi. Do what you like about your inspiration, and we will go on gluing.

Chris. Vas. [Aside] Congratulations on your name day . . . that does not do at all. We bring congratulations . . . [Thinking] I will take someone else's ready made. If you please, Maria Dmitrievna, ready: [Declaims the verses]

> The Graces are quite out of date
> To appear with bouquets at a fête,
> But I'm a Tory true and blue,
> And so I think of naught but you.

By your leave, once again.

Mar. Dmi. That's enough; excellent, very good. We, dressed as three Graces, will offer him a wreath, and I will sing the verses. I am much obliged to you, Chrisanth Vasilievich. [Presses the student's hand. As this moment the door opens, and the head of Sim. Ivan. is seen]

Mar. Dmi. [Frightened, as the girls are hiding the lanterns] Oh, Simeon Ivanich! Don't come in, don't come in!

Sim. Ivan. [Looks with horror at his wife] Ah, you are all here. I am very glad that you are so cheerful. Good, good, I will go away.

Nat. Pav. My God, he saw everything.

Lyouba He didn't see, he didn't see.

Mar. Dmi. Where is that accursed Nikolinka? Lyouba, drag him here. [Lyouba runs out, and knocks into Nikolinka]

Nikolinka. [Running in] He is coming, he is coming himself, he is coming!

Mar. Dmi. What had you done with yourself?

Lyouba. Where were you?

Nat. Pav. Oh, it's all spoilt!

Chris. Vas. Faithless servant, I put you to be sentinel over my garden, and you fell asleep. [They all tease Nikolinka]

Lyouba. I'll box his ears.

Nat. Pav. I'll smear him with soot.

Nikolinka. [Struggles] Let me go, let me go!

Scene 5

[The same. Thiona Andreevna]

Thio. Andre. [Horrified] Heavens! They have suffocated the child, ye people!

Chris. Vas. Madam, however pleasant your company is to us, yet at the present moment we could part with you without weeping.

Thio. Andre. How horrid of you.

Lyouba. Go, walk off. [Slams the door]

Thio. Andre. [Complaining, showing her torn clothes] Rachel crêpe! A present from my benefactress!

Mar. Dmi. Oh, you, with your benefactress.

Thio. Andre. [Looks in from the door] Oh, such horrors, the student is got up as the devil. I shall go and tell everything. [Exit]

Mar. Dmi. Get off! Nikolinka, run to the clock and we will get to work.

Chris. Vas. [Looks at himself in the mirror] Anyhow, that's why she said that the student was got up as the devil! Let me look. [Looks in the mirror, and with vexation pulls off the paper] How stupid! There is nothing clever at all. I humbly thank you, Natalia Pavlovna, this is all your cleverness. [Puts on his coat]

Lyouba. It was not Natasha, I glued it on myself.

Nat. Pav. and *Mar. Dmi.* Myself, myself.

Chris. Vas. How childish!

Mar. Dmi. That's enough, Chrisanth Vasiliev! Can't you understand these jokes? However, I must go, as you cannot understand.

Nikolinka. [Runs] She is coming, she is coming, herself. She will question us.

[They run for no reason round the table, shrieking out, little fathers!]

Mar. Dmi. Stop, take everything away. Hide yourselves.

[All run off except Mar. Dmi. and Chris. Vas.]

Scene 6

[Maria Dmitrievna, Chrisanth Vasilievich and Glaphira Theodorovna.]

Gla. Theo. Pretty, very pretty indeed![1] Simeon, poor Simeon! You have no pity on my grey

[1] Pronounced in French.—Tr. note.

hairs. And for whose sake? My handsome one, here is a hairbrush.

Chris. Vas. [With dignity] What right have you to offer it me?

Mar. Dmi. Afterwards, maman, afterwards I will tell you all. Let us go, Chrisanth Vasilievich. [Takes off the student]

Scene 7

[Glaphira Theodorovna alone, then Thiona Andreevna.]

Gla. Theo. [Alone] No shame, no conscience, so, my lady, you take the arm of your sweetheart, and go off. My God! No, I shall not endure this. Thiona Andreevna, Thiona Andreevna!

Thio. Andre. [Runs in] My benefactress! . . .

ACT III

Scene 1

[Glaphira Theodorovna and Thiona Andreevna are laying out cards for fortune telling.]

Thio. Andre. She heard an unusual crack, looked, and by her under the holy images were circles, all circles.

Gla. Theo. What were the circles for?

Thio. Andre. God gave that as a sign to her. Well, she went off to the elder, approached the cell,

looked . . . there was a sow—a demon on her. She clapped her hands so loud, luckily a lay brother came, and besprinkled her; he says it is nothing—he is a blessed person. Another time God knows what the attack will be.

Gla. Theo. [Gives her the cards] Shuffle.

Thio. Andre. Allow me. There, my lady, this elder also advised, Go, he said, to Solovetski.

Gla. Theo. Where?

Thio. Andre. To Solovetski. Well, then she went off, went, went, but all the time he was before her eyes.

Gla. Theo. Who?

Thio. Andre. The demon, of course. And her leg all at once got bad, a lump.

Gla. Theo. What?

Thio. Andre. A lump, on the very same place—on the joint. How should it be there? She stopped at the old woman's, but the elder, Father Anphilogi, told her: never sleep on your right side, because he is there.

Gla. Theo. Why, my dear, do you tell this so unintelligently? Who is there?

Thio. Andre. He. Yes, Father Anphilogi says: at the birth of every man it is said in the scriptures——

Gla. Theo. Now, that's enough for you. I haven't a head for it. Where is our Senya? Poor Simeon! I cannot think of it. There he is, let us go. [Exeunt]

Scene 2

[Simeon Ivanich alone. Then Natalia Pavlovna.]

Sim. Ivan. [Enters, gloomy] No, I cannot stand this any longer. Mother called me and explained clearly that she herself had seen how my wife was talking secrets with this fellow. She says . . . But what she says and thinks is horrible . . . let us assume that it is all nonsense. But how could she behave so as to give a reason for thinking this? I must decide. I cannot leave it like this. I shall go to her and have an explanation. Masha, Masha, how I loved you! And this gentleman—it won't go well with this gentleman—no, it won't! [Takes up a stick]

Scene 3

Nat. Pav. [Enters] What are you so dismal about, Simeon Ivanich?

Sim. Ivan. I? No, I am all right.

Nat. Pav. What is this terrible stick? What is it for?

Sim. Ivan. It is . . . Natalia Pavlovna, what would you do, if you had loved someone with all your soul, and that one did not mind insulting you and hurting you in your most sensitive spot?

Nat. Pav. I really don't know. I have never experienced it.

Sim. Ivan. [Takes up the stick] I know what is to

be done. [Threatens with the cudgel] No, I'm all right. Good-bye. [Exit Nat. Pav.] Oh, no . . . Where is Masha? I will go and finish everything. I will finish it, without fail. [Goes]

Mar. Dmi. [Outside the door] Senya, is that you? One moment, I beg you.

Sim. Ivan. [Aside] She too does not wish to conceal it. It is unintelligible!

Scene 4

[Chrisanth Vasilievich.]

Chris. Vas. [Enters, carries candles, moves the table and chairs] They ask you to go out for a minute.

Sim. Ivan. [With the stick] Stop, wait!

Chris. Vas. Afterwards. [Exit carrying the candles]

Scene 5

[Lyouba.]

Lyouba. [Runs up to the door] Glaphira Theodorovna, my dear, quickly, what we are doing is charming! Come quickly. [Runs off]

Scene 6

[Glaphira Theodorovna, Thiona Andreevna, Simeon Ivanich, then everybody]

Gla. Theo. What is this? The end of the world?

Thio. Andre. In the dark, if only you would compose a prayer.

Sim. Ivan. No, this cannot be endured, either I or . . . They have gone mad. I do not understand anything.

Scene 7

[All enter in costume, with the transparency.]

Mar. Dmi. [Sings the verses]

The Graces are quite out of date
To appear with bouquets at a fête,
But I'm a Tory true and blue,
And so I think of naught but you.

[Thiono Andreevna, Glaphira Theodorovna, and Simeon Ivanich weep]

Sim. Ivan. Oh, I'm a fool! I thought . . .

Mar. Dmi. What did you think?

Sim. Ivan. Nothing, I won't tell you.

Mar. Dmi. Really?

Gla. Theo. Charmant, how nice! Children, embrace me!

Thio. Andre. Ah, the nihilist, he has hit it off.

Chris. Vas. Now then, honoured lady, Thiona Andreevna, we will make peace with you.

THE CONTAMINATED FAMILY

THE CONTAMINATED FAMILY

Comedy in Five Acts

Translated by C. J. Hogarth

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Ivan Mikhailovitch Pribyshev, a landowner, aged 50.
Maria Vasilievna, his wife, aged 45.
Liubov Ivanovna, their daughter, aged 18.
Katerina Matveievna Dudkin, their niece, aged 26.
Peter Ivanovitch, their son, aged 15.
Maria Isaevna, their nurse and housekeeper, aged 48, originally a household serf, but treated as one of the family.
Alexei Pavlovitch Tverdinsky, the son's tutor, aged 22.
Nikolai Dmitrievitch Venerovsky, an excise official, aged 35.
Bekletov, a friend of Venerovsky's.
Guests, servants, maids, footmen, the manager and factotum of a posting-house, *etcetera, etcetera.*

ACT I

Scene 1

[Morning in the dining-room of the Pribyshevs' mansion. Nurse is standing beside a table on which are materials for tea and coffee, and knitting a stocking. Maria Vasilievna, seated at the table, is holding a teacup in her hands.]

Nurse. Give me the cup if you want it to be re-filled. Aye, drink up what you've got, or leave it alone. As it is, you're only playing with it.

Mar. Vas. [half-offended] Yes, Nurse. In one moment. I haven't quite finished yet. Besides, what a way to speak to me! One would think I was a child! *Now* [handing the cup to Nurse] you can re-fill it.

Nurse. But stop, stop, stop! It's gone eleven o'clock, and not half the gentlefolk yet had their tea. You sit there, drinking and drinking, but there's still the Master, and the stee-udent fellow, and Petrusha to come.

Mar Vas. "The stee-udent fellow"? "Student" is the right way to pronounce it.

Nurse. Maybe, but I call him that because I don't like him, and don't think him respectable.

Mar. Vas. Well, my only feeling for him is pity.

Nurse. As though he needed pity. Has he ever said a civil word to anyone? He's been two months in the house, yet never done anything but show his teeth at us. [Nurse suits the action to the word] Aye, he sneers at everyone, does that good-for-nothing scamp! And there's no getting rid of him. Not long ago I warned Duniasha. I said to her, "If ever you find him coming after you, just you slap him across the jowl, and send him in to table with your mark on him, so that they'll ask him where he got it." Aye, I did that. And haven't we had to fit him out with linen—aye, down to our best bed-linen?

Mar. Vas. Oh, Nurse, Nurse, what a woman you are! Think, now! He is poor, and without a friend in the world. Besides, when he first came to us he was so thin that he horrified me.

Nurse. Well, since then he's grown fatter, and when he and Petrusha arrive *he*'ll drink his share, I warrant you! And then there'll be Katerina Matveievna, our jewel, with book and all. And then, when I've cleared away, it'll be coffee again, and a bit of food, all because that Spindleshanks has arrived.

Mar. Vas. Nurse, Nurse! What names you give to people! "Spindleshanks"?

Nurse. Aye—Nikolai Dmitrievitch Venerovsky, Liubochka's young man or suitor.

Mar. Vas. The rubbish that you talk! Is he bound

to be Liubov's "young man" just because he calls as any other man might do?

Nurse. A-ah! You may think your old Nurse Maria the stupidest woman that there is living; but thirty years in service upstairs can't but teach one something. So I tell you that Spindleshanks doesn't come riding seventeen versts every day just to take a look at your coffee. No, no, matushka! He comes because he has counted up Liubochka's dowry.

Mar. Vas. Oh, you may *think* so, but as a matter of fact he is no one's "young man," and in any case he is the last man in the world to run after money.

Nurse. Matushka, in these days no one, however fine, can get along without money. Besides, in every suitor there's a bit of the greedy, and it's the same with our innocent as with the rest. Of course, he's something or another in the Excise —I know that: but I don't know what that something is, and, though I've asked folk about him, I've gotten no good of him. For one thing he's mean, and for another thing he's a bakhval.

Mar. Vas. A *what?* A "bakhval"?

Nurse. Aye. In our speech that means, "If you please, I'm better and cleverer than everyone else, and everyone but me is a fool."

Mar. Vas. Oh, you do him a wrong! Besides he *is* clever, and a writer. You don't understand such things.

Nurse. Well, I'm sorry for Miss Liubochka. He's quite turned her head.

Mar. Vas. Perhaps it's not her at all that he's after, but Katenka? Yet here you are saying——

Nurse. Very well, then! Think me silly if you like, but I can only say what I believe. Besides, at one time he carried on with Katerina Matveievna as well. It was when she was a governess, and she used to visit his rooms regularly. But so far as marrying goes, *he* knows which of the two will bring him the most money.

Mar. Vas. Katenka was properly introduced to him in St. Petersburg. You ought not to see bad in everyone.

Nurse. Aye, aye, matushka. But a governess may start as a governess, and then be governed. It has been like that with Katerina Matveievna.

Mar. Vas. [with a gesture of amusement] Oh, you talk rubbish, rubbish!

Nurse. Besides, everyone knows that things in the house are different now.

Mar. Vas. Are they? Then am *I* different? Oh, you silly goose!

Nurse. You keep the same because you've a good heart in you, but sometimes the Master surprises me until—— [Breaking off, Nurse throws up her arms expressively] Indeed, what's come to him? He's quite another man now. And to think of the things that used to be! Was there ever a day, once upon a time,

when valet Sashka could get the Master dressed without a beating? And was there ever a starosta [1] who didn't soon find himself in gaol?

Mar. Vas. Come, come! You are letting your tongue run away with you. Besides, were those things things that ought to have been? You know that they were not.

Nurse. Oh, I'm not praising them, and I'm not blaming them. In those days a master was the master, and that was all about it. But it'll take more than fifty years to alter people's characters. Look at that paper of the Tsar's, the paper that came out in the first week of——

Mar. Vas. Oh, the Manifesto, you mean, goose!

Nurse. [slightly offended] Aye, the paper that sent a lot of household serfs about their business just because they'd done good service. Well, I say that ever since that paper came out a change has been going on, and the peasants have been getting to work worse. Only the other day I heard that Venerovsky fellow (Nikolai Dmitrievitch, you know) saying simply scandalous things to some peasants. O, you mustn't mind my calling a spade a spade, for it takes more than fifty years to alter people's characters. During that time folk may lose their self-respect, but not their characters—no, howsoever much they try. So, as I say, I heard Nikolai Dmitrievitch saying wheedlingly to some peas-

[1] Estate foreman.

ants (Kirishkin Dyev was one of them) "You ought to be allowed to work or not just as you please!" I listened and thought to myself, "What next? It's though he were talking to a prince!"—And I turned and spat.

Scene 2

[Enter Katerina Matveievna]

Nurse. Here comes our beauty! And hasn't she made a figure of herself! [Katerina Matveievna has hair cropped short, pince-nez, a short skirt, and a book under her arm. She seats herself at the table without any sort of a greeting, leans forward upon her elbows, lights a cigarette, and begins reading]

Kat. Mat. [after an interval, and with exaggerated politeness] Maria Isaevna, would you be so good as to give me some tea?

Nurse. [handing her a tumblerful] Why, certainly, certainly, sudarina! [To herself] I'm blessed if she isn't a miracle! Never so much as a "Bonjour" to her aunt! She must be queer, I think.

Mar. Vas. Katenka, we have been discussing Nikolai Dmitrievitch. Nurse declares him to be after Liubochka, and I after you. Mais comment croyez-vous? Nurse will call him a "suitor."

Kat. Mat. [emphasising her words didactically]

Venerovsky's development and views of life place him so wholly at variance with the petty existence of this *milieu* that we are not in a position to judge him.

Mar. Vas. But do you believe him to be a marrying man?

Kat. Mat. I believe him to be a man who would never marry unless he could meet with a woman sufficiently emancipated of life, and of outlook upon life, to be capable of appreciating the mission to which he has been called.

Mar. Vas. Non, mais dîtes-moi: which of the pair of you do you believe him to be after—yourself or Liubochka? Do not ask Nurse. She is only a fool, and I can but laugh at her.

Kat. Mat. There! Maria Isaevna is your senior in years, and always addresses you as "you" when speaking to you. Yet you call her "thou," and a fool into the bargain! I consider such an attitude to be an insult to the freedom and dignity of the individual, and, in virtue of that conviction, would add that, though I recognise your right to hold opinions of your own, those opinions only jar upon and annoy me.

Nurse. [sarcastically] How I thank you, Katerina Matveievna, for taking my part! [To Mar. Vas.] Yes, everyone knows you to be so cruel that you'd cut up a body alive!

Mar. Vas. Ah, Katenka! Je plaisante. Nurse and I love one another! But tell me: whom is

Nikolai Dmitrievitch after? Is it yourself, or is it Liubochka? Je voudrais savoir votre opinion.

Kat. Mat. How can I tell? [Brushing back her hair, and puffing at her cigarette] You see, he has no need to be (to use your own very peculiar expression) "after" me at all, for I stand on the footing of a free woman, and can bear myself towards him, or towards any other man, no matter what his age or calling, on a basis of absolute simplicity. For the rest, he is, in my opinion, a typical intellectual, a typical man of the age. And, that being so, it is natural that he should impart to his intercourse with me a measure of respect and sympathy which enables us to, to—so to speak, to—to associate on becoming and wholly non-complex terms of mutual esteem. Moreover, I am a relief to him from the petty feminine society with which, owing to his official duties, he has perforce to come in contact. Yet how comes it that you suppose him to be (again to use your own expression) "after" Liubov Ivanovna more than "after" myself? Such conduct would be wholly unaccountable, for she is a child, immature, undeveloped, wholly unable to hold views consonant with a personality of his type, whereas *I* am in every way his equal.

Mar. Vas. So you hear Katerina Matveievna's opinion, Nurse?

Nurse. I do, matushka. Yet, stupid though I may be, may I ask why he comes here so often?

Kat. Mat. Why should he *not* come?

Nurse. At all events, he doesn't come here to act as tutor to Miss Liubochka's brother. In the old days, if one went often to a house where there were two marriageable young ladies, one very soon got asked which of the two he wanted for a wife, seeing that otherwise one had a club to go to, and could go there as often as one liked.

Kat. Mat. You misunderstand me, Maria Isaevna. Have I not told you that he comes to see me because he and I have shared experiences, and therefore have common subjects of discussion?

Nurse. My dear, it is my humble opinion that that won't always content him. Just you remember that Liubochka has not only youth and looks, but also a property of five hundred souls, whereas you are some years older—and he's not the sort of man to go courting thirty souls when he can get five hundred. How about that stee-udent fellow?

Kat. Mat. [angrily] Allow me, allow me! Alexei Pavlovitch is far too young and raw for a woman like myself—But never mind. Anyone but I might have been offended, but, for myself, I stand above such things, and would merely remark that Liubov Ivanovna, with her childish demands upon life, does not reach even to

Venerovsky's shoulder. This he himself recognises—he has told me so more than once. That is the first point. And as regards the second point, you view it from a wrong angle. Possibly I shall risk being misunderstood, but, for all that, I will try to use terms more accessible to your intelligence, and repeat myself. People who think as I do do not consider any means of subsistence to be justifiable which are not acquired through honourable and personal labour: particularly is public opinion coming to rate landed properties like this one of your own but as so many false links with a form of existence that is passing. Hence Venerovsky would not care a jot whether I brought him a million souls, or none, for his one solicitude would be to see my views come to consort with his own. And inasmuch as they do that already, he and I could straightway enter upon life's battle undaunted.

Nurse. Well, he'll not always think it enough to come and see you for *that*. He'll also be for courting Liubochka, and then he'll find out that five hundred souls suit his views to a T, whereas thirty souls—oh, not a bit of it!

Kat. Mat. [losing her temper again] But allow me, allow me! You say that I have thirty souls; but, as a matter of fact, owing to the increasing diffusion of popular enlightenment, real possession of souls is fast becoming obsolete. I have never possessed any souls of my own right. I

renounced that right as soon as ever I came of age, and there is no trace upon me of the foul stigma of serf-possession.

Nurse. Aye, but that won't help you with Nikolai Dmitrievitch. He'll be for courting Liubochka because——

Mar. Vas. [nervously] Yes, yes, Nurse! Have done! What a woman you are! You are enough to drive anyone crazy!

Kat. Mat. Allow me again. I daresay you believe that what I have been speaking of is difficult and complicated, since your ideas still have room in them for established orders, and divine right, and so forth: but in reality the life of those who have risen above the mesh of social prejudice is a simple life, and insensibly, as I express my views to Venerovsky, my very doing so demands of him, and receives from him, the mutual frankness upon which the every impulse of every honourable personality stands based.

Nurse. Ah, my dear, but Liubochka Ivanovna possesses something better even than five hundred souls, for he's in love with her.

Kat. Mat. [excitedly] But how can that be in view of the fact that her personality is so insignificant, so jejune? Is he not more likely to be in love with myself?

Nurse. No. For he's a billy goat. That's why-y.

Kat. Mat. [recovering, and brushing back her hair] Where was I? Oh!—Liubov, as you under-

stand her, represents attraction of the flesh. I, on the other hand, represent a personality wholly inaccessible to intelligences so fleshly and animal as your own—Oh, I beg your pardon! It were better that you should leave me alone. [She rests her elbows upon the table again, and resumes her reading]

Mar. Vas. Go away for now, Nurse. When the others come I can do the pouring-out.

Nurse. [departing] A nice way for our Katerina to go and insult us all! "Animals," indeed! Thirty years have I been in service, and never been called *that* before!

Kat. Mat. [raising her head for a moment] Allow me! Love is an impulse honourable only when its two consenting parties stand upon equal rights. However, I suppose that that too lies beyond your understanding! [Raising her head again] Maria Vasilievna, I do not respect that woman. [She resumes her reading]

Scene 3

[Enter Ivan Mikhailovitch. As far as the doorway he is followed by his estate steward and foreman.]

Iv. Mikh. [to the foreman, over his shoulder] I have now got twenty-six workless days owing to

me. But there! It's no good saying anything to a fool. [As he steps into the room] You can go to the devil! [To Maria Vas., after entering] *Who* has no respect for *whom?*

Mar. Vas. Oh, it was only that Nurse was chattering some of her usual nonsense.

Iv. Mikh. Ah! She *has* a venomous tongue when she likes, but, for all that, she's a dear woman. [He seats himself at the table] Now, give me some tea, Maria Vasilievna, for I've been a-horse since five o'clock, and ridden two to a standstill. But I've patched up an arrangement with some of the hands. How comes it now that one can do nothing even with the free workers—nothing unless one can be everywhere at once, and never give oneself a moment's rest? Yesterday I had half a field left unploughed, and a whole meadow unmown, for not a single hand turned up. Think, now! However, to-day I *have* managed to strike a bargain with a party partly of my own hands, and partly of some hired ones—after promising them a gallon of beer apiece—and they ought to be at work now. On the other hand, what a splendid fellow that steward Vasily is—honest, capable, and industrious!

Kat. Mat. Never can free labour result in loss. Were it to do so, it would violate every law of political economy.

Iv. Mikh. Well, I shouldn't mind yoking you and

Nikolai Dmitrievitch to that labour for a bit, just to see how you'd change your tune.

Mar. Vas. But dîtes-moi, mon cher Jean. Why do you, all the same, keep saying that things are going to improve with free labour? How can things "improve" if the hands can take themselves off whenever they like?

Iv. Mikh. Oh, only the manorial hands will be able to do that.

Mar. Vas. But education will lead *all* the peasants to refuse work, and I cannot see how that will be an "improvement."

Iv. Mikh. Not once, but a thousand times, I've told you that though the Manifesto obliges the peasants to work for me so many days per week, it doesn't oblige them to work for me on all. That is where they have the whip hand.

Mar. Vas. But they say that some are giving up work altogether—that they're told off to a job, and never go to it? Oh, it passes my understanding, Jean.

Iv. Mikh. Well, if the peasants were altogether to give up work, we should soon find ourselves altogether without food. The point is that they work, but do less of it. On the other hand, at least the whole matter is now in legal form, and no longer dependent solely upon the masters' good pleasure. Or does even that explanation lie beyond you?

Mar. Vas. I repeat, where is the "improvement" if

the hands work less? To me it seems to be no improvement at all. However, ne vous fâchez pas, even if I *am* rather stupid.

Iv. Mikh. Oh, do not think that I am angry. Very likely Providence intended you to be born without any understanding. [Taking from her his cup of tea, he remains silent for a moment or two] Where is Liubov?

Mar. Vas. Gone out mushroom-hunting with the maids.

Iv. Mikh. And has Nikolai Dmitrievitch called yet, or sent a message?

Mar. Vas. No. By the way, I have something to tell you about him. In the first place, il veut faire la proposition, and, in the second, I have heard that——

Iv. Mikh. You have heard it from whom?

Mar. Vas. Oh—on dit.

Iv. Mikh. From whom? People may say what they like within four walls, yet it is always well to know who are the people saying it.

Mar. Vas. Well, you may disparage me, but I have heard that, after all, Nikolai Dmitrievitch is not so very desirable. For one thing, is a post in the Excise a post worth very much? Besides, he is said to be a "bakhval." Do think over what I have told you.

Iv. Mikh. What tales do get themselves into that head of yours! It is a marvel where such things can come from! No, no matushka! Follies

of the sort are best left alone. Besides, how did you get hold of the silly word "bakhval"?

Mar. Vas. Oh, everyone is calling him that.

Iv. Mikh. Then avoid their absurd fancies. Why let them suggest them to you? We have nothing to judge this man for. Not a father in the land would not be glad to have him for a son-in-law. Besides, I cannot abide either match-making or guesswork. The man's position can safely be left to God. Let us not pry into such matters. We at least know that he has made for himself a name as a writer, and that he is not at all the sort to marry for money.

Mar. Vas. Oh, no one has *told* me anything. Only I, I—well, j'ai mon opinion.

Iv. Mikh. Listen to me. In the first place, though he is a man of the age, a man of advanced views, he is also a man of intellect and learning, and known to all Russia as an author. And in these days it is possible that a type of that sort may be preferable even to a general. And in the second place, his post in the Service is an honourable post, and bound to carry with it not less than two thousand roubles a year. My own opinion of him is that he could reach any goal upon which he had set his heart. As for any eccentricities in him, they only mean that he doesn't go in for the fashionable life. Yes, I believe him to be thoroughly disinterested, and not at

all the sort of man to marry for gain. And just because he wouldn't care whether a girl brought him a fortune or not a kopek would he make her the happier. Lastly, he is a man who has caught Liubochka's fancy.

Mar. Vas. Nevertheless, people persist that he is after money.

Iv. Mikh. Who persists? If you have heard that, then I, for my part, repeat that I believe him to be thoroughly disinterested.

Mar. Vas. And I, for my part, say that he has got an eye upon her dowry.

Iv. Mikh. [to Kat. Mat.] Do try and make her understand that Nikolai Dmitrievitch is not at all what she says.

Kat. Mat. Maria Vasilievna and Maria Isaevna are welcome to think what they like, but personally I wonder that they should impute sordid motives to a man who has never given them any cause to do so. Nikolai Dmitrievitch is one whose whole life shows his interest to lie solely in the public welfare. And I feel certain that if ever he should contemplate joining his life to that of any woman soever his first and foremost condition would be independence of person and property alike.

Iv. Mikh. [meditatively] Well, we must let the younger generation have its chance, even though one who, like myself, is getting on in years sees

a good deal of waywardness and frivolity in that generation, and, besides, finds it hard to slough old customs.

Kat. Mat. [looking up eagerly from her book] That is the very first thing said this morning with which I can find myself in agreement. How irresistibly does progress gradually shed light even upon the most hidebound personality! [There follows a brief silence]

Iv. Mikh. [resuming] Yes, I can see that free labour is the coming system, even though the workers are difficult, and almost impossible, to deal with. For my part, as regards the peasants, I am for exemption—for a general settling up, so that only agrarian relations remain. Nothing could well be fairer than that.

Mar. Vas. How can you ask whether anything could be fairer? Of course nothing could.

Iv. Mikh. Well, it will have to come. I imagine: and though Katenka and Nikolai Dmitrievitch, I am aware, account me a conservative, a reactionary, I have a good deal of sympathy with the peasants, and realise the old system to have broken down. Not that I do not regret the fact. Rather it is that I recognise the younger generation to be growing up, and that our Liubochka would be better to marry an up-to-date man, a man of education, rather than a man connected with the soil. Even Petrusha is growing up to ideas different from our own: so that we

parents must not stand in our children's light.—Where is Petia? With his tutor?

Mar. Vas. Yes—gone to the lake in search of plants, though I forget exactly what sort. I wonder if they have got drowned! Vraiment je crains!

Iv. Mikh. Plants, did you say?

Kat. Mat. Yes, it was Alexei Pavlovitch's idea to go and investigate the fibral structure of some water growths.

Iv. Mikh. The changes that the new age is bringing us! I cannot imagine myself caring for studies of that sort when I was a boy, yet here is this lad of mine agog for natural science! Well, at least the tutor is turning out well, and that is another thing for which we have to thank Nikolai Dmitrievitch, seeing that it was he who recommended the young fellow. Yes, Alexei Pavlovitch is very nice—quiet and well behaved. Hi, you, Sashka! Bring me my pipe. [To Kat. Mat., half-apologetically] Old habit, you see. I suppose you think that I ought to have called Sashka "Alexander Vasilievitch"? [Enter Sashka with the pipe]

Mar. Vas. [suddenly incensed] Oh, anyone and everyone is to be treated civilly except your wife! But what does that precious tutor of yours mean by arriving with no linen, and forcing Nurse to give him our best visitors' linen, so that if any visitor were to come now he would have nothing to lie upon? A tutor with no linen

except the clothes on his back! Well, he is *not* going to have my best sheets, and you can think what you like about it.

Iv. Mikh. Now, now, Maria Vasilievna! Enough, enough! Nurse will see to it. I like the young fellow. I think him nice and sensible.

Mar. Vas. "Sensible?" Then is it my fault that he comes here with nothing at all, and has to be given everything? The latest thing is that he has taken it into his head to drink nothing but milk! Also, Duniasha has been complaining, and you had better keep an eye upon his doings. A tutor without a stitch of linen! Was ever such a thing heard of?

Iv. Mikh. I suppose you are wound up now, but for my part I think that we ought not to find fault with him, but to thank God for having sent us such a man. And as regards his possessing no linen because he is too poor to afford any, that is all the more reason why we should supply his needs.

Mar. Vas. You misunderstand me—you always go catching me up! I only meant that things must be done in the right way. As a matter of fact, I am still more sorry for him than you are—I pitied him the very first time that he sat down to a meal here, and have given him some night-shirts already, and told the maids to knit him some socks, seeing that, however stupid I may be, I do recognise that a tutor should be one

of the chief persons in a household. So I grudge him nothing. I merely say that things must be done in the right way. Haven't I asked the carpenter to come and mend the schoolroom table-leg, and haven't I——

Iv. Mikh. Yes, yes, matushka. Be quiet, for goodness' sake!

Scene 4

[Enter Alexei Pavlovitch Tverdinsky, the young tutor]

Tverd. [with a bow as he takes a seat beside Kat. Mat.] May I have some tea?

Mar. Vas. Good morning, Alexei Pavlovitch! Tea or coffee? Bread? [As she speaks she pushes every possible article in his direction] Please ask for anything and *everything* that you want.

Tverd. I do not mind, but at least I should like some tea.

Iv. Mikh. Where is Petrusha?

Tverd. Coming as soon as he has changed his clothes. He fell in, and got wet.

Iv. Mikh. What were you doing?

Tverd. Studying botany—rather, as we had to alter our plans, fishing.

Iv. Mikh. Katerina says that you were going to study natural science?

Tverd. Yes, but we found that we couldn't, as we had not got a microscope.

Mar. Vas. Bread? Pray eat as much as ever you can.

Tverd. [to Kat. Mat.] What is that highly improving book of yours? [He takes it into his own hands] Oh, it is a "Physiology"—useful, but rather sketchy. Why not try Lewes? His "Metamorphosis of the Ovum" (I think that that is the title) is not at all bad.

Mar. Vas. What is an ovum? Pray help yourself to some more cream. They will be bringing a fresh lot presently. Katenka, what is an ovum?

Kat. Mat. That from which every created organism develops.

Tverd. [to Kat. Mat., aside] She might have learnt that even from the most elementary knowledge of an egg.

Iv. Mikh. I too have been reading about ova. Are ova to be distinguished even in grain?

Tverd. They are—for, otherwise grain would be worth neither discussion nor study. But only through a microscope, of course.

Iv. Mikh. And do microscopes cost much?

Tverd. No, one can get an inferior one for very little—though Nikolai Dmitrievitch has a microscope that cost 360 francs, and our University as instrument that cost 15,000.

Iv. Mikh. Then I will buy one. [Seating himself beside his wife, he gives himself up to silent

smoking. Kat. Mat and Tverd., seated opposite, continue their conversation]

Kat. Mat. You have just missed something—quite another scene, quite a "plantation" incident.

Tverd. Have I? Well, these people *must* amuse themselves, and there happened to be nothing else offering. Even I find the place tedious sometimes, and am yearning to get away and go and sit for my degree.

Kat. Mat. Personally, my view of the position is different. I find that, the duller one's environment is, the more energy does one put forth. And since the only factor capable of altering the barbarous social relations of this provincial circle is our permeation of those relations—which already I find myself to be markedly influencing —with suggestions and ideas, you should the more value your charge of gradually elevating Petrusha's as yet immature personality until it can join with us in instilling into this dead-alive milieu the theories of progress. Nikolai Dmitrievitch takes the same view of it all as I do.

Tverd. Well, may God have mercy upon us! One can't lie buried in a slough without beginning to get sticky. Let these people do as they like, and we as we like. The danger is less that one feels tempted to protest than that one feels tempted to let one's will to protest weaken. See those peasants. They have been ploughing since four

o'clock this morning, whereas at midday *we* are just sitting down to breakfast! How is one to reconcile oneself to that?

Kat. Mat. No. But at least we can make allowances. Venerovsky, owing to his official duties, moves in the same sluggish circle as we do, but never does he let that circle get the better of him—he just pours into it a ceaseless stream of his ideas.

Tverd. What? Venerovsky? That fellow in the Civil Service? I have no respect at all for such people. No, no, my liberal exciseman!

Kat. Mat. Oh, but allow me, allow me! You and I differ. Venerovsky has a remarkable personality. Only look at the energy which he devotes to his schools and public lectures!

Tverd. Very well. Then I will hold my tongue about him.

Kat. Mat. Only this morning I was discussing him with the two old women, and laugh still when I think of the conversation. You will best understand how they look upon us and our like when I tell you that they are supposing Venerovsky to be visiting here solely for the purpose of marrying Liubov Ivanovna—rather, of marrying Liubov's dowry!

Tverd. Well, I can quite conceive the fellow playing a trick of the sort.

Kat. Mat. If you speak like that again we shall

quarrel. Venerovsky marry! Why, whom, I should like to know?

Tverd. Liubov Ivanovna is not bad-looking, and has expectations. In fact, given a really advanced and spiritually-minded young fellow, her personality might develop into something notable. Her prime need is an honourable young mentor.

Kat. Mat. What? How can that be so when her personality is wholly undeveloped?

Tverd. It might develop with time.

Kat. Mat. [after a thoughtful pause] A-ah!—Yes, I do see your point of view. Yes, you are the very man for her. She would soon react to your influence.

Tverd. Oh, I merely say that, but for the fact that she lives hemmed in a sordid milieu, she might even yet develop into something respectable.

Scene 5

[Enter Petrusha, the son of the house, in school costume.]

Mar. Vas. Here is Petrusha at last! What will you have, Petia? Tea? Coffee?

Petrusha. Good morning, mother! No, neither, as I have had some milk already; but you might order me a dish of something to eat. Good morning, father.

Iv. Mikh. What does this behaviour mean? Come! Try and behave more simply.

Petrusha. If you suppose me to be playing the fool, you are mistaken, I assure you. I did say "Good morning, father."

Iv. Mikh. Yes, I know, but have you lost your wits? Never mind your new notions, but come and greet me as usual, and then go and kiss your mother's hand.

Petrusha. Why should I?

Iv. Mikh. [sternly] Because I have told you to do so.

Petrusha. But why have you told me? What can come of my just touching the back of a hand with the tips of my lips?

Iv. Mikh. Nevertheless, I have bidden you. Go and kiss your mother's hand.

Petrusha. Such an act would be contrary to my new convictions.

Iv. Mikh. What did you say?

Petrusha. Oh, I have talked it all over with Alexei Pavlovitch. I feel certain that such acts are only foolish prejudice.

Iv. Mikh. My boy, I——

Petrusha. No, father, I will not, though that does not mean that I have altered my view of you, or that, though I may cease to kiss your hands, I shall cease to render you what respect you deserve.

Iv. Mikh. Once more listen to me. All this sort of

thing, your new "convictions" and the rest, does not matter so long as you continue also to perform the proper observances. We of the old school consider payment of honour to parents to be a cardinal rule. Once more, therefore, I say, go and kiss your mother's hand. [Here he rises to his feet] Come!

Tverd. [to Kat. Mat. sotto voce] It looks as though another scene were pending!

Petrusha. [red in the face] Well, though of course it lies in your power to compel me to do what you wish, human relations ought never to be restricted.

Iv. Mikh. I——

Petrusha. [kissing his mother's hand] For that much is the right of human dignity.

Mar. Vas. Now, Petenka! An omelette, or a quince pie? Nurse shall be told about it. Nurse, tell them to bring Master Petia something.

Iv. Mikh. [to Tverd] Alexei Pavlovitch, I, I—— Pardon me, but I would request that in future you confine your labours with my son exclusively to scientific pursuits, and omit all instruction with regard to behaviour to parents. Of course, to yourself some of our customs may seem strange and old-fashioned, but they are our customs, and I beg of you to leave them alone.

Tverd. Mm-m!—what do you mean?

Iv. Mikh. Never mind. Pray continue to teach our

son about ova and so forth, but not to interfere with—no, nor even to offer suggestions as to—his behaviour towards ourselves.

Tverd. Again I would ask your exact meaning?

Iv. Mikh. This, then: that I will not have my son again give me the foolish chatter that he has just given me. That is what I mean.

Tverd. Why not give him a thrashing?

Iv. Mikh. Do not make me lose my temper! No more need be said.

Tverd. [taken aback] Very well. I understand. Believe me, I had no wish to presume. It is only that, as I am acting as your son's tutor by your own wish, I cannot well instruct him and all the time conceal from him my views.

Kat. Mat. No; it would be impossible for Alexei Pavlovitch to have continually to be passing over the deductions of science!

Petrusha. Besides, my convictions are my right.

Tverd. Yes, all life has its rights, and prejudice is the only institution which cannot bear cultured and reasoned criticism.

Kat. Mat. The same with all obsolete views. The immense strides made by science have rendered them untenable.

Iv. Mikh. Say no more about it. All that I wish is that there shall be made of my son only what I desire there to be made of him. [A pause ensues] Alexei Pavlovitch, I hope, I hope very much indeed, that I have not offended you?

Tverd. Of course not! My sense of my own dignity is too high to take offense at such things. Now it is lessons time. Come along, alumnus.

Petrusha. [as Sashka enters with a dish] No, no! Not until we have breakfasted.

Tverd. Well, we *might* do worse than sit down again. [And he suits the action to the word]

Scene 6

[Enter, with a dancing step, Liubov, the daughter of the house. She is dressed in a flowered frock and straw hat, and has a basketful of mushrooms in her hands. Behind her are two maids]

Liubov. Mamma darling, someone has just seen me home!

Mar. Vas. Who was it, if you please?

Iv. Mikh. Yes, who?

Liubov. You must try and guess!—Why, it was Nikolai Dmitrievitch! He came and joined me as I was walking with the maids. And oh, the mushrooms that we found—beautiful white mushrooms, in the moat near the servants' wing! *Aren't* they splendid? But Nikolai Dmitrievitch didn't find any—not a single one. The only thing that he found was a piece of fly-agaric. Just look at the darlings! And you too, Katenka! [She shows all present the con-

tents of the basket] And look at the birch mushrooms too! Aren't there quantities of them? Yet Sashka had said that there were none at all in the birch avenue! Papa, have *you* seen them?

Iv. Mikh. No, dear. But where is Nikolai Dmitrievitch?

Liubov. Brushing his clothes. He fell, and got all muddy. And he was wearing white trousers, too! Ha, ha, ha! Papa, he and I have had such a *lovely* talk! You should have heard it! I will tell it you later, as we must be alone when I do so.

Iv. Mikh. No. Tell it me now, and the whole of it.

Liubov. It was very important, for it was all about myself, but really and truly I can't tell it you now.

Iv. Mikh. Well, I don't know whether your careering about the country alone with young men is altogether a proper thing. Suppose——

Liubov. Oh, the old-fashioned idea, Papa! It *is* old-fashioned, isn't it, Katenka?

Iv. Mikh. What? You too? Now, come and tell me what you and he said to one another.

Liubov. I can't, I tell you, Papa, but if you will wait a little you shall hear everything. Mamma, haven't these mushrooms a lovely smell? [She dances to her mother's side, leans forward, and shows her the mushrooms] Isn't one of them

exactly like our old tutor, Karl Karlowitz? Don't you remember his short, stumpy figure? Today I feel so lighthearted! We are going to go mushrooming again tomorrow. But this time I shall take only Masha with me, and we shall start very, very early.

Mar. Vas. What will you have, Liubochka? Tea? Coffee? Bread?

Liubov. All of you will be tremendously surprised when you hear what Nikolai Dmitrievitch said to me this morning. Katenka, you will be especially surprised. And the same with you, Alexei Pavlovitch. Petrusha, I will try some of what you are eating. [Depriving him of his fork, she takes a morsel from the dish. He continues to munch as before]

Kat. Mat. [to Tverd, sotto voce] To think of *that* creature, *that* hoyden, mating with Venerovsky!

Tverd. Yet her face and figure are not to be despised.

Liubov. [pointing to the maids behind her] Mamma, may I give them something as well? [She hands each of them a slice of bread] You are to come again tomorrow, and we will start very early.

Mar. Vas. [giving her a cup of tea] Put plenty of cream into it.

Liubov. No—after all, I don't want anything, as I shared a crust with Masha this morning. It was simply delicious! [Resuming her seat, she

jumps up again] Oh, Papa! All this time I have been forgetting to kiss you! Do you know, *you* are not unlike an old mushroom. What were you all quarrelling about when I entered?

Iv. Mikh. Your brother had taken it into his head that he could cease to kiss his parents' hand, and merely say "Good morning, father," "Good morning, mother."

Petrusha. [still munching] I "took" nothing "into my head." I arrived at a conviction.

Liubov. Ha, ha, ha! You silly boy! However, every day the new style is putting strange ideas into people's heads.

Iv. Mikh. And into your head, in particular, little mischief, the idea that you can walk about alone with young men?

Liubov. Pooh! You must not scold me for that. I *will* walk about alone with young men. Alexei Pavlovitch, will you come mushrooming with me tomorrow?

Tverd. I will if I can possibly manage it.

Liubov. Ah, but, after all, I don't think that I want to go.

Mar. Vas. [to Tverd.] Will you have some more omelette?

Tverd. No, I thank you. Sufficient now. And what about you, young hopeful? Come! March! [Exeunt he and Petrusha]

Scene 7

[Enter the estate steward]

Iv. Mikh. [to the steward] What is it?

Steward. The mowers have left their work in the gravelly field.

Iv. Mikh. Indeed? And the free workers as well?

Steward. Yes. There was a fight between them and the estate peasants, and the estate peasants drove them off, and knocked Matorin about so badly that we had to bring him back to the homestead, and lay him out in the estate office.

Liubov. Oh, yes! I forgot to tell you. And when I saw him he looked so dreadful—just like a brigand, and frightened me so!

Iv. Mikh. How did it start?

Steward. Well, the mowers had not been out long when Lemkin and his brothers-in-law came running up from their own plots, and shouted to the free workers, "What do you mean by mowing our barin's land?" The free workers replied, "Your barin himself hired us to do it," but Lemkin shouted again, "A nice lot you are to come and try to beat down our wages! Why, we had been standing out for a rouble a desiatina, and might even have got two, for he was in a fix. Aye, or we might have got grazing for our horses!" Then he took off his coat,

and other peasants came running up, and a bloody fight began.

Liubov. Yes, and the man was so bloody when I saw him! He looked dreadful!

Iv. Mikh. But why did you look at him? It was no business of yours. [To the steward] What did the foreman do?

Steward. He went off for the constable.

Iv. Mikh. Well, well!

Steward. Ivan Mikhailovitch, I tell you, as I have told you, before, that nothing can be done with these men, even with the free workers. Last night two halters were stolen, and two iron-tyred cartwheels would have gone long ago if I hadn't had my eye upon them. I've done my best, and lost blood over it, but now I feel the responsibility to be too much for me, and I must ask you to dismiss me.

Iv. Mikh. My good fellow, I——

Steward. Yes, Ivan Mikhailovitch, you have been very kind, but I simply cannot keep on.

Iv. Mikh. You must be joking. How could I let you depart halfway through the working season?

Steward. With your leave, I—I am no longer one of your serfs. I've done my best, and the fault lies with the men. Go I must.

Iv. Mikh. Here's a pretty kettle of fish! [He paces the room, and then halts again before the steward] So you think to scare me by threatening to upset everything half-way through the

working season? Then go you shall, you rascal, and I'll no longer have my hands soiled with you. Sheer blackmail I call this, or the devil knows what. [He paces the room]

Mar. Vas. I believe all the peasants will take themselves off now.

Liubov. Well, Papa will then be able to carry on only with free labour, which Nikolai Dmitrievitch says is much the best.

Iv. Mikh. My God, the difficulties that arise—difficulties enough to make one despair! Yet am I to shut my eyes and run away from them, even though men may break into one's house, and steal, and refuse to work, and children set up to advise their elders? The world must have gone mad. And they call this 'progress'!

Kat. Mat. The cause, I believe, lies deeper. Its roots lie in the relation of the social adjustment to the popular life.

Iv. Mikh. Hold your tongue, for heaven's sake! [To the steward] Once more I beg of you to remain with me. How am I to look for another steward at a moment's notice?

Steward. But I have obtained another situation.

Iv. Mikh. [furiously] Oh, you have, have you? You mean to treat me like that? Then to the lock-up you go.

Steward. No, no, barin! The day for that is over.

Iv. Mikh. [seizing him by the collar] I dare not, do you say?

Mar. Vas. [springing up] Jean! Ivan Mikhailovitch! What are you doing? For my sake, don't!

Iv. Mikh. [dragging the steward towards the doorway] I intend to deal with him in my own way. Come along, you cur!

Scene 8

[Enter Nikolai Dmitrievitch Venerovsky]

Vener. Ah! Just in time to hear you saying that things are becoming impossible, and you cannot cope with them! So—ha, ha, ha!—your system has broken down? Well, that may prove to be not an altogether unmitigated evil.

Iv. Mikh. I confess that I feel helpless. See this man here—a man whom I have benefited in every way, and given his freedom under the Manifesto, and fitted out with a plot of land. After managing my property for me, here is this man, for no earthly reason whatsoever——

Vener. Telling you that he cannot remain in your service any longer? Ah, it is the old, old story. Though itching to thrash him, and torture him, and even burn him on a slow fire, you cannot, and so ask: what next? Well, that is the reverse side of the free labour medal.

Iv. Mikh. The fellow can go to the devil! [To the steward] Yes, cut along. First, however,

hand over to the foreman, and tell him that I will see him about it presently myself.

Vener. I wonder at your losing self-control in this manner. You are all for force, force, even though you are known as a retrograde already.

Mar. Vas. [to Vener.] Tea or coffee? Cream? Pray also help yourself to that dish and some bread.

Vener. Merci. [To Iv. Mikh.] How is your free labour working? As I came along just now—ha, ha!—it hardly seemed to be humming. Will it succeed?

Iv. Mikh. I think so, in spite of hindrances. And you?

Vener. And I? Oh, I too believe that we shall overcome these agrarian troubles, so that they will cease to hamper and retard the country.

Iv. Mikh. Ah! You think as I do.

Vener. But our motto must be "step by step." Yesterday I opened a Zolotovian school, after procuring the necessary premises, and raising the necessary books, by canvassing for them amongst the local business people. The school will succeed. You and Liubov Ivanovna must come and inspect it some day. You will find it interests you greatly.

Iv. Mikh. Your efforts are most praiseworthy. And when are you going to give your next public lecture?

Vener. Never, I fear, for contrabandists are so for

ever playing their tricks that almost all my time has to be devoted to the Public Service. It is not three days since I caught a contrabandist redhanded, and was offered a bribe of three thousand roubles to let him go. Queer fellows they are, and it's no good reasoning with them —one might as well speak to them in Chinese. Yes, you and Liubov Ivanovna must come and inspect that school. As I work and work, and look back at my work, gradually I perceive this rustic circle to be absorbing light. True, the work tends to render me unpopular with certain people, but what of that? Where they hate I love, or at the worst despise, and, for that reason, hold always the whip-hand.

Iv. Mikh. What happened at that club the other day?

Vener. Oh, we caught a knave, the local constable, trying to burgle the place—caught him in the very act. However, though most men are knaves, you will have been pleased to note that even this very slow filtering of progressive ideas into the popular brain carries with it a dawning sense of our human dignity. For is there anything that a highminded personality cannot accomplish? Not but that I should like to remain modest on the subject as regards myself.

Iv. Mikh. Perhaps I ought not to ask, but what was your education?

Vener. Before I answer that I have a small per-

sonal matter to lay before you. [He draws Iv. Mikh. aside] Now, however much one may try to think of one's public duties, I find that occasionally one must think of oneself as well. Yes, egotism still clings to humanity, and I am no exception to the general rule. My difficulty is—Do you know, I have so lost the habit of looking after my own interests that I find myself at a loss for words! Truly the situation has its comic aspect!

Iv. Mikh. Surely you are not pressed for money? Pray, in that case, consider me at your service so far as my means will allow.

Vener. No, no! That is not my difficulty. The difficulty is one which not only calls for a mutual understanding, but——

Iv. Mikh. Do not hesitate to be frank on the subject. As a matter of fact, I think that I can guess its nature.

Vener. And I believe that your guess would turn out to be correct. Bluntly, then, let me say that I desire your daughter—wish for her very greatly indeed. If possibly you can give her to me, I beg of you to do so, or to say that——

Iv. Mikh. [very solemnly] Without hesitation let my reply be that your proposal meets with my entire approval. From the first I have had a high opinion of you; and now your present conduct has confirmed it. Yes, you have acted like a man of honour, in that the purpose for which

you have been visiting my house has still not led you to forget your better feelings, and frighten my daughter, or compromise her. No, you have preferred first to address yourself to her father—which I take to show a very lofty and noble spirit on your part.

Vener. Well—er—perhaps I ought to explain that that is not *quite* what my conduct has been, for, as a matter of fact, I *have* already spoken on the subject to your daughter, and been accorded her consent.

Iv. Mikh. Oh? Mm-m! Well—well, I now accord mine as well.

Vener. And Maria Vasilievna's may be assumed? Yes, quite so, quite so. Another point. To you, I know, I must seem to hold some rather curious opinions. Well, for the very same reason I should be glad to be saved some of the usual congratulations, and some of the usual gossip, and to have to meet as few of your people as possible. May, therefore, the affair remain, for a while, a secret? You see, I look upon matters of ceremony as foolish.

Iv. Mikh. Very well, my dear son-in-law—I understand your feelings thoroughly. But——

Vener. Also, might I request that, even when you and I have become relatives-in-law, you will still remain "Ivan Mikhailovitch to me," and I "Nikolai Dmitrievitch" to yourself? For any

other footing between us would seem to me pointless and offensive and absurd.

Iv. Mikh. Yes. Er—yes, very well. I will respect also that desire of yours. And now let me make clear to you the circumstances of Liubov's property. We Pribyshevs are not exactly rich, but——

Vener. Again oblige me. Do you suppose that material possessions can have any weight with me? Let Liubov Ivanovna's property remain her property, and especially if it is hers in her own right. For the rest, I can refer you, as regards my mode of life, to anyone who has a knowledge of mankind. In this marriage I desire but one end, and, though not in love with your daughter in the ordinary sense of the term, perceive her to have the potentialities of a fine, but undeveloped, nature, and therefore intend to devote my whole efforts to enabling her one day to attain the same spiritual pinnacle as myself. That done, I shall feel that I have placed another spiritual achievement to my credit. On the other hand, no one must thwart me in the task, and I would ask of you that, however much you may believe to be difficult and perplexing certain matters which I and mine deem to be everyday affairs, you will allow no one to become privy to the secret before, say, the first of August. Then, but not before then, let us have

a general settling up of business matters. [The pair exchange a hearty hand-clasp]

Iv. Mikh. I quite understand, I quite understand. Let me embrace you.

Vener. Not—er, not yet. No, at least not yet. Indeed, I should greatly prefer that you didn't. Good-bye! [Exit]

Iv. Mikh. A fine fellow!—Yes, a fine fellow, even though one of the new age! Not but that in some ways some of this seems to me a little strange.—Well, I suppose I must get used to it. So to God be thanks and praise!

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene 1

[Vener. is seated alone in one of the untidy, bachelorish rooms of his flat, and admiring a portrait of himself.]

Vener. [soliloquising] So I am to be married! Somehow it seems strange and foolish that such a man as myself should be thinking of binding himself for life to a socially perverted and wholly undeveloped personality, and squandering his mental strength and acumen upon sordid minutiæ. Yet also it seems alluring—yes, very alluring indeed, since, in the first place, the union will give me material security, and a chance of

retiring from the Service, and devoting myself solely to literature, and in the second place, it will give me the girl herself—nor is she by any means bad-looking. Oh, the business has much in it that may prove pleasant, and even delightful. And how pleased Liubochka looked when she kissed me! She seemed to be quite transported. And I? Well, I too felt something not wholly expected. I wonder why that was? It seems that up to now I have been curiously mistaken about my appearance, and wanting in appreciation of my personality. [He lays aside the portrait, and, instead, looks at himself in a mirror] A very handsome face! Yes, and a very imposing figure! Altogether, an exterior of the sort which women call "nice-looking." Which shows how easily one can fail to realise oneself. And to think how absurdly nervous I was when I first approached her! As though—ha, ha!—I need have been so! But the truth is that always I had believed my face to be anything but my fortune; and fallen back upon the idea that, though I was not a ladykiller, I was at least brainy, and said to myself, "What man of my acquaintance is cleverer than I, or can grasp things at once more swiftly and more thoroughly?", and conceived that, whilst not good-looking, or equal to smart young fellows of the sort who dash about in costly equipages, I possessed an immense forcefulness of intellect,

a mind of the purest liberal bent, and a lofty standard of morality, as three qualifications well calculated to counterbalance anything else, and to afford me the comfort of reflecting that, however little I might be fitted to shine in drawing-rooms, or to chatter French after the manner of certain detestable people, I was better educated, better cultured all round, than they were. "Is there," I would say, "any branch of knowledge soever, whether of philology, or of history, or of the natural sciences, in which I could not carry out a research? No, every one of those branches is familiar to me." But suddenly, as I pondered upon nature's gifts in this way, and reflected how unvaryingly she seemed to allot to the one type intellect and mental vigour, and to the other the worthless attributes of facial comeliness and bodily grace, I began to wonder whether nature's plan were not sometimes varied, after all, by her allotting both the one set of attributes and the other to one and the same individual. For, as I remembered, St. Petersburg had never really afforded me a chance of testing my power over women, and least of all over such a woman as—Yes, and so there happened what *has* happened, and a woman is in love with me in the social circles which I naturally affect, and a woman is in love with me in the wretched circle which looks to externals alone—looks to them so wholly that

for a while even Liubov may find it difficult to detect my inward merits in all their fullness. [With yet added complacency] How very "awkward," very "ugly," and the rest of it, I must have been! I laugh to think of my hitherto failure to realise myself. [Looking at himself in the mirror again] Good-looking, *very* good-looking. Which qualification, added to the moral superiority thrown into the greater relief by that qualification, should prove no mean asset. Perhaps there exist too few of my type? Indeed, for all I know, I may be the only example of it? [He tries the effect of knitted brows] As I expected, that gives me a look of calm, profound introspection, a look most difficult to resist! Can it be that it is the mark of a strong nature to depreciate itself, and only of a weak one to believe itself omnipotent? At all events that would seem to be so from the fact that a man so exceptionally gifted as myself has so long undervalued his own qualities. Oh, the matter stands proved beyond a doubt.

Scene 2

[Enter a friend of Venerovsky's named Bekletov —an ex-university student, and present Civil Servant.]

Bek. Hullo, my friend! I am fresh from a board meeting where we have had excellent sport.

Vener. The extent to which you devote yourself to the task of life is most commendable. And what did the good fortune of today send you?

Bek. The carpeting of three landowners—of two gentlemen and one lady, added to a clerk who had been caught accepting a bribe—all four at the same sitting! So you will understand how I enjoyed myself.

Vener. Good! Pleasure to you is pleasure to me also.

Bek. The sport to beat description. You see, such sport constitutes my whole existence—it is my one passion, my one specialty! Whereas your "brotherliness," your "idealism," seems to me so much blather. And the same reason is rendering me anxious about this contemplated marriage of yours: not so much because I am a friend and colleague of yours, and therefore inclined to view the marriage as a question regarding your happiness—oh dear no! as because I see in the marriage a scheme to defraud you, and in the unmasking of that scheme my bounden duty. But how are things going? I believe that we are due at the Pribyshevs' today. Is not that so? At all events I seem to remember today as having been fixed for the betrothal's formal announcement, and now stand armed for the fray.

Vener. Well, I, for my part, stand wholly indiffer-

ent, and consider that the silly ceremony ought to be shirked as far as possible.

Bek. It need not disturb you. But what about the financial part of the business? Is that too going to be included in the announcement, or has it been announced already?

Vener. The practical outline of it has.

Bek. Good! For it is the only important part.

Vener. When first her father referred to the subject I said that her property was to remain hers, and hers alone, and he seemed to accept that view.

Bek. "Idealist," "idealist"! Then you went and put a weapon straight into the man's hand, since, owing to the bovine attributes of his nature, he must have at once deduced that nothing at all need be given you, that you could very well be left to support the wench as you are. Oh, the folly of it! And now, I suppose, it will fall upon *me* to enlighten him.

Vener. Not altogether, for I too have taken certain measures to that end, to the end of my not issuing as a fool out and out. On the other hand, do not forget what is my principal aim in the matter—do not forget that, whilst anxious not to let her choice of myself as a husband deprive her of the material amenities to which she has hitherto been accustomed, or to leave her interests in that respect unguarded, I desire

above all things to rescue her from her present demoralizing life-conditions.

Bek. Very well, but don't go and make blunders through your "brotherliness" and all that, for you "idealists" are too simple for a game of this sort—too apt to plan first, and think afterwards. By the way, what are the "measures" that you say you have taken?

Vener. These. The second time that I saw Pribyshev he harked back to the question of the money affairs, and upon that I at once said, after remarking that at all times I preferred private discussion of such matters to public proclamation of them——

Bek. Or, in other words, O sir and fool, that you desired to see your hem'ing and ha'ing leave you dished——?

Vener. Wait. After making that remark, I suggested the present date as suitable for such a discussion, and am going further to say, when the discussion comes off, that now I do definitely wish to have the financial arrangements settled up.

Bek. And he will respond to that by fooling you! [A pause] Always remember that ceremonial is everything to people of this sort, and that it is in ceremonial that we can best catch them. Tell them, therefore, that you will not set foot in the church until your hands have actually had put into them the deeds of the property.

Vener. Oh you seem to assume that I look upon the whole thing as a question of subsistence alone, and I dislike that assumption. You are practical to excess.

Bek. And you are "idealistic" to excess. Do not forget what sort of people it is that we have got to outwit. Let knave cut knave. These people have been robbing their serfs, and waxing fat upon the people's blood, for five centuries past: yet here do you now propose to treat them "idealistically"! True, I admit that your aim of delivering the girl from her environment, and all that, is well enough: but towards that end what means do you as yet possess? Oh, your conduct is boyish, childish!

Vener. Nevertheless, that aim stands first in my estimation.

Bek. Oh you "idealist"! You must be taken in hand at once, or you will fall into the pot like a plucked chicken. Why not try to catch the old man on the other flank by telling him that the money is needed because his niece is beginning to annoy you?

Vener. I admit that the niece is deficient in comeliness, but not that she is not wholly emancipated and developed, and anything but a fool.

Bek. In other words, that she has resting upon her the cruel, accursed stamp of intellectuality? Well, it seems strange that a woman should never at any time be given both mental vigour

and bodily comeliness! On the other hand, that pink-faced little idiot——

Vener. Yes, yes. Unfortunately, though the niece's person has never had any real charm for me, there *was* a time when she and I stood upon a certain footing. This was because she appeared to me to be the only thinking person in the neighbourhood, and to act as a sort of relief. Oh, a little attraction *may* also have been involved, but that is all that her claim rests upon. Not but that she is not a nuisance already, and, when she hears of my engagement, may become a greater nuisance yet.

Bek. You have treated her badly.

Vener. [a little stiffly] My good Arkady Vasilievitch, what I have done is not my fault! I have only acted as is incumbent upon any honourable man by whom the nature of female emancipation is understood as it really is. From the first I told her that no resultant obligations could be recognised, and that the arrangement must be temporary only.

Bek. Ha, ha, ha!—But I see that I am making you feel uncomfortable—possibly because, after all, you do recognise that the lady has been badly treated? Well, well! So much for "idealism"! Now, with regard to the rest of the people with whom we have to deal, bear always in mind that their notions of right and wrong, the notions of their social circle, leave our usually accepted

moral ideas standing on their hands. Try to do business with them in forgetfulness of that, and you will come out worsted! Ever your guiding rule should be that their "dishonourable" must be your "honourable," and their "honourable" your "dishonourable." That reckoning alone will enable you to move about safely. By the way, I suppose you *did* get some gratification out of the lady, seeing that in a fishless country even a crab ranks as a fish?

Vener. Possibly I did; but now she is importunate, and assuming "rights," and threatening to injure me. The best plan would be to get her out of the way. Another factor is the tutor. He is more important still. The reason why I do not ignore him as I should have liked to do is that, not yet knowing me thoroughly, and therefore not yet appreciating me wholly, but still regarding certain matters from the debased standpoint, Liubov is inclined to be interested in the fellow. Thus the situation's two prime elements. And since, as I say, Katerina Matveievna is smouldering with a desire for "an explanation," and likely to break out into open flame on hearing of my engagement, it is the more necessary that those two elements, the tutor and the lady, should be removed. So do me this favour: that if I cannot settle with them myself, you will take them in hand—my place.

Bek. Ha, ha! Yes, I will take them in hand.

More. I will join them together irrevocably. [Both burst out laughing]

Scene 3

[Enter the caretaker, or man-of-all-work]

Caretaker. Nikolai Dmitrievitch, a lady has come to see you, and there is a gentleman with her.

Vener. Who is she?

Caretaker. The lady who used to come before.

Vener. Pribyshev and his niece, I suppose! Well, show them in.

Bek. The birds are flying straight into the net! Well, in that net they shall be retained. [Enter Kat. Mat. and Iv. Mikh.]

Iv. Mikh. Aha! Here are Katenka and I! We come to you straight from an inspection of your school. Liubochka wished to come too, but she had caught a chill yesterday, and we thought she had better stay at home. And so, your school inspected, we are going to inspect yourself. My word, the children delighted me! Splendid, splendid!

Vener. An additionally fortunate feature is that now I can introduce to you my friend and colleague Bekletov, a gentleman as charming as clever, and one whom you, particularly, Katerina Matveievna, ought to know.

Kat. Mat. [shaking hands with Bek. so warmly as

to make him grimace] A phenomenon which has always struck me with especial force is the phenomenon that, whereas men can preserve the tie of comradeship inviolate, we women cannot reproduce the phenomenon. Of that, surely, the basic cause lies in the inferior standard of education hitherto accorded to us women?

Bek. Unity of outlook alone can consolidate the tie. If that unity is absent, then——

Kat. Mat. Oh, but allow me, allow me! I submit that you are Venerovsky's comrade less because you are his colleague in the Service than because you share his social convictions?

Bek. Ye-es. Oh, yes. Quite so. Because I share his social convictions. And you have been visiting his school?

Kat. Mat. We have. What is your own opinion of it? For one thing, it has struck me that to develop in the young the power of reflection may do the young harm rather than good. For you will agree that undeveloped personalities demand——

Bek. Yes, I agree, although I do not wholly understand your point of view. Possession of a power of reflection is itself development, and therefore—— [Still conversing, the pair move away]

Iv. Mikh. Nikolai Dmitrievitch, a visit to that school had long been a wish of mine; and, now that I have paid the visit, it will ever remain an

abiding remembrance. But before leaving home I decided also to take this opportunity of having my private talk with you about Liubov's property, and to bring with me this [he holds up a portfolio] and the necessary documents. For I felt that here we could talk more comfortably than we could do anywhere else, and then, when we had had the talk, drive back home together. In passing, what I am going to say can all be said before Katenka, since, as you know, the affair is today to become generally known. And, for that matter, she may help us rather than hinder us, and be able to give us advice, seeing that though in some ways she is eccentric, she also possesses much good commonsense.

Vener. But will not the fact that my friend likewise is present make things awkward for you?

Iv. Mikh. Oh! In that case, perhaps, the matter *had* better be deferred until later in the day, though you are not going to be let off entirely—a knowledge of the points concerned is too vital. [Bek. and Kat. Mat. draw nearer again] Particularly grateful am I for the permission to visit your school. The pupils looked so charming, and, as for their powers, I shall never forget it! For all of which the credit is yours alone. Wonderfully, magnificently, has the scheme been conceived.

Vener. Well, we are working step by step, and, if

hindered at present, at all events shall succeed later.

Iv. Mikh. [to Bek.] You see, sir, I conceive education, true education—by which I mean moral education—to be the prime requirement of progress.

Bek. Er—sometimes it at all events proves useful.

Kat. Mat. [to Vener.] Allow me, allow me! Why have you not based your school upon the phonetic method rather than upon the Zolotovian? Much more easy of assimilation is the latter, and much more purely rational.

Vener. Yes, but we cannot set out to do everything rationally, and for my part I prefer the Zolotovian method as the more simple one of the two.

Kat. Mat. Also, as I have been saying to Bekletov, to cultivate a power of reflection in half-developed personalities is yet another piece of irrationality.

Iv. Mikh. [interposing] Excuse me a moment, but I must attend a local meeting at which I am due —it will not occupy me any time to speak of— before helping you to finish our conversation here, and then leave for Pribyshevo.

Vener. Certainly, and we can pass judgment, ha, ha! in your absence. By the way, Bekletov will be coming with us today. I presume you can make room for him in the tarantass?

Iv. Mikh. So, for the moment, good-bye. I shall be only too delighted to see you at my house today, for the day is one of general rejoicing, and any friend of Nikolai Dmitrievitch's will be a welcome guest. [He enters into further conversation with Bek.]

Kat. Mat. [to Vener.] If I should remain in this neighbourhood I should like to help with the teaching in your school, and, in particular, to show you, through practical experiment, that to develop reflection in the young has potentialities for harm.

Vener. Oh, I do not say that you are wrong.

Iv. Mikh. So, for the moment, good-bye. I shall only be gone for about five minutes.

Vener. Then pray go. [To Kat. Mat.] Why object to development of youthful reflection? That which benefits ourselves cannot but benefit others.

Kat. Mat. Allow me, allow me—for you cannot think how that visit to the school has brought ideas swarming into my head! What, I would ask, is the effect of that development upon an immature personality likely to be? Is it well to develop an individual intellect in every separate personality? Surely mental development in an aggregate of units which as yet lack a common initiative is calculated to injure, rather than to benefit, those units, and the more so seeing that the social adjustment still remains abnormal?

Vener. I conceive that mental development is good wheresoever and by whomsoever manifested, so long as——

Kat. Mat. So long as, you would say, it conduces to progress?

Vener. Yes. That is an incontrovertible fact save only for the one consideration of potential hindrances through environment.

Kat. Mat. I agree. *A propos*, pray say why you still continue to live in these deadly surroundings, which you must find as uncongenial as you find the local social atmosphere difficult to breathe?

Vener. [endeavouring to speak with a tone of affection] Because——

Kat. Mat. Oh, but allow me, allow me! I have not said all that I wish to say. I understand that you have set before yourself the aim of permeating this stagnant social swamp with the light of your intellect. But in such a setting as this your efforts are bound to fall crushed. You need a more spacious arena. [To Bek.] You agree with me, do you not?

Bek. [To Vener. sotto voce] There you are now! Right into your hands! Say now *your* say.

Kat. Mat. [meditatively] Yes, a crowd of ideas has come upon me through the visit to your school, and made me respect you more than ever. [Kissing Vener.'s hand, and in an undertone] I believe that I named today for our

explanation: but I desire to receive it in private. [To Bek.] Bekletov, I stand above social prejudice, and as I have a little personal matter to discuss with your friend, perhaps you would not mind leaving us? You too, I feel certain, stand above social prejudice.

Bek. Certainly! I will move into the other room. [To Vener., as he departs] Splendid! Things couldn't possibly have happened better. Yes. "Developed," but unpleasant. [Exit]

Scene 4

Kat. Mat. [passing from pensiveness to confusion] Yes, today is to end my mental struggle. Let me begin by recalling to you (for you are a personality lofty in your spiritual level) the fact that woman now stands rid of the social incubus which has strangled her for ages—she has acquired equal rights with man. And, that being so, I may speak without circumlocution, and say that at last I have achieved self-realisation—and —and—Well, do you say the rest.

Vener. No, I will only listen, for I feel sure that what you have to say will prove interesting.

Kat. Mat. But—but—but one moment.

Vener. I would remind you that I am waiting still. Recently you told me that you would today express what you think about a certain subject. Yet something seems to be preventing you?

You are an emancipated woman. Try to control yourself. Clarity of relations comes of clarity of verbal expression alone. Above all things do I desire all relations to include the element of definiteness. If I myself speak to you plainly, I would ask of you to do the same rather than let yourself be hampered with exploded views on sexual attitudes, and succumb to an embarrassment which, in reality, is no more than the element known to the mystics of blessed memory as "The Old Adam." So come!

Kat. Mat. [more firmly] What you say is right. That embarrassment *does* come of an "Old Adam" to which I long ago rose superior. [She offers him her hand] Venerovsky, I have been exploring my consciousness, and feel convinced that you and I ought to compound a partnership. I feel assured that that is so. And, having mutually decided that point, let us pass to the question of what form or rite can most suitably cement our union. Very possibly the circumstance that each of us possesses a herd of undeveloped relatives may lead you to consider that a formal marriage ceremony would be advisable; and if that should be so, I should be ready to agree even to that ceremony, ready to take even that step, for all that it would jar upon my convictions. All that I could ask in return would be that, as this environment is

stifling you, and crushing myself, we should, the ceremony over, depart for St. Petersburg, where greater sympathy with our views would be to be met with, and we could enter upon a life based solely upon the new principles. The question of your possession of me stands decided already.

Vener. Does it? Well, your statement is at least honourable and clear, and I must be downright in proportion—I could do no less, and must at all events make it my aim.

Kat. Mat. But allow me, allow me! I have not yet said the whole of *my* say. The life which is awaiting us is destined to be of importance not only to ourselves, but also to humanity at large, in that we, in that life, shall be for the first time exemplarising the sex attitude wherein all the ideas of the future on the subject are to find substantiation. Accordingly——

Vener. Might I put in a word?

Kat. Mat. Accordingly, as I respect you, and as you know me to be a woman at once emancipated, possessed of equal rights with man, and proud of having been the first to say to the other, "I desire a union with you"—all these things being so, do you now, simply and honourably, accept my proposal. [Brushing back her hair, she falls to pacing the room excitedly]

Vener. Your words have illustrated once more the truth that the best and the most seemly attitude

towards life is always the simple and the direct attitude. You say that you desire to form with me a union, and I admit that desire is in the highest degree intelligible, and that both the choice and the manner of its expression display the loftiness of standard of intelligence to which you have attained, and leave me unable to name any other woman who could have acted as sensibly as yourself: but, unfortunately, I can only reply to you, with a frank directness equal to your own, that the proposed union would not please me, and that therefore I am not in a position to accept it. For the rest, the power of according truth its meed of moral cognition which has always been a distinguishing characteristic of yours warrants me in the assumption that you will, from now henceforward, never break silence on the subject of our relations in the past.

Kat. Mat. Oh, but allow me, allow me! [Halting, she brushes back her hair] Do I understand, then, that you are rejecting me?

Vener. I am. Yet though that is my meaning, and irrevocably so, I would add to it that, otherwise, not a man of the new age but would have considered your proposal a reward for his best efforts. Only the fact that I have chosen elsewhere already necessitates——

Kat. Mat. A-ah—Forgive me. I still respect you. [She falls to pacing the room hysterically]

Scene 5

[Enter Iv. Mikh.]

Kat. Mat. [to Iv. Mikh.] Nikolai Dmitrievitch and I have been having a talk, and making our mutual position clear. The definiteness which has resulted has come as a relief, and left everything explained.

Iv. Mikh. Then there was something between you *needing* to be explained?

Vener. Yes: but only something relating to some abstract questions.

Kat. Mat. But allow me, allow me! To something more than some abstract questions.—However —never mind. I am very glad that this has happened. Shall we go home now?

Iv. Mikh. Pardon me. First I must have a business talk with Nikolai Dmitrievitch for which I have brought with me the necessary documents. —Katenka, I am now free to tell you everything, and you must congratulate both Nikolai Dmitrievitch and myself. For he has done us the immense compliment of asking of us Liubochka, and consenting to marry her on the first of August!

Kat. Mat. [to Vener.] There are three kinds of love. There is the love of Astarte, there is the love of Aphrodite, and there is the love based upon equal rights. As yet, apparently, you have

failed to rise above the first. I had thought better of you, yet I still respect you.—Ivan Mikhailovitch, shall you be long over your talk?

Iv. Mikh. No—perhaps a quarter of an hour.

Kat. Mat. [to Vener.] Then give me the latest number of "The Polar Star," and I will read it whilst you are engaged.

Vener. [handing her the publication concerned, and pointing to a particular page in it] I should like to direct your attention to *this* article. It discusses its subject very ably. But meanwhile would you not rather move into the other room, where you will be less disturbed?

Kat. Mat. No.

Vener. But surely?

Kat. Mat. No.

Vener. [to himself] Here is this woman acting as yet another obstacle to a proper explanation with the father! [Kat. Mat. seats herself at the table, and begins reading, but every now and then glances at Vener., and gives a doubtful shake of the head. Iv. Mikh., on the opposite side, opens his portfolio, and draws out some papers. Vener. seats himself facing Iv. Mikh.]

Iv. Mikh. My good Nikolai Dmitrievitch——

Vener. What exactly is the business? I suppose you can tell me that without further words?

Iv. Mikh. I will explain. When first I tried to acquaint you with Liubov's expectations, you very magnanimously would not hear of them—

which, of course, caused me to form a high opinion of you: but now the time has come when, whether you like or no, you must let me, as Liubov's father, render to you, her intended husband, an account of my stewardship.

Vener. Oh, certainly, certainly! And, as you can see that I am listening, pray proceed.

Iv. Mikh. Let me say frankly that if anyone but yourself had been concerned in this matter I should have kept an eye open for self-interestedness: but, as it is, I feel sure that nothing of the kind exists, for not a soul could accuse you of wanting to marry for money.

Vener. [with a glance at Kat. Mat.] Of course not! Of course not! However, even yet we have not reached the essential point. [Iv. Mikh. rummages amongst his papers, and produces one]

Iv. Mikh. From this document you will see that I stand possessed of a moderate amount of property which is destined to pass to my son. Liubov, however, inherits certain property from her mother, and we have decided that, subject to the mother's wish to retain a small portion of that property for her own use during her lifetime, Liubov's inheritance shall pass to yourself forthwith.

Kat. Mat. [brushing back her hair, and rising] Allow me, allow me! Venerovsky, hitherto my consciousness has respected your personality;

but now it is beginning to waver. For only a fortnight ago you told me that you had no respect for the personality of your intended bride (though, of course, that was only to be expected), and that——

Iv. Mikh. Do not interfere. Why are you meddling like this?

Kat. Mat. Allow me! [To Vener.] —and that Liubov did not even enjoy your respect as a woman. And now you propose to marry her! Is that altogether consistent?

Vener. I do not know what you are referring to.

Kat. Mat. I repeat: is that altogether consistent?—However, now I have spoken my mind, and you can resume your bargainings with Ivan Mikhailovitch. Merely would I add this: that, as I look upon the settlement of your and your bride's money affairs as a mere sordid deal in human personalities, I must request that you do not further insult the human dignity which I represent by prolonging its conversation. That is all.

Iv. Mikh. You are both foolish and tiresome. Yes, and rather strange.

Vener. As, for that matter, is our business discussion. If you wish to assign me anything, pray assign it to Bekletov on my behalf, and not to myself direct—whether today or later. Meanwhile I will instruct Bekletov to that effect.

Iv. Mikh. Then let us now start for home.

Kat. Mat. One moment. Do you think that I am going to accept this humiliation without a protest?

Iv. Mikh. What a nuisance you are making of yourself! Do come along.

Vener. Go on, and I will catch you up in a moment. [Exeunt Iv. Mikh. and Kat. Mat.]

Scene 6

Bek. [issuing from the other room] Evidently the woman is an awkward customer, and must be got rid of.

Vener. She must. But how?

Bek. Besides, I suspect this scene to have been rehearsed—her to have been put up to it by the Pribyshevs.

Vener. No, no! She spoke out of sheer fatuity.

Bek. Yet I tell you that these people are capable of any meanness. Look here. Let me do the money discussion for you. Suggest that to Pribyshev as we go along, and see that he accepts the suggestion. Also, as regards the woman, she is manifestly being consumed by her amorous instincts, and therefore our cue is to find her a swain. She will release you then, but not before. You see the idea, don't you—to kill two birds with one stone?

Vener. Ha, ha, ha! Your practicality is splendid.

Scene 7

[In the garden of the Pribyshevs' mansion there are seated Mar. Vas. and Nurse.]

Nurse. Matushka, it looks as though what I told you is going to come true. "A suitor," I said, and a suitor he is. Aye, and never, of late, have I been able to lay out the cards without the King of diamonds and the wedding card turning up amongst them.

Mar. Vas. Yes, Nurse. But it is hard to have to part with an only daughter! When Ivan Mikhailovitch first told me it was as though someone had struck me here [She points to the back of her neck] and my head is still aching with it. I have been for a walk since then, but the pain is no better. And to think of the dowry, and of the wedding ceremony, and all the rest!

Nurse. But why need you worry? Everything is ready for you—everything here on the spot.

Mar. Vas. I daresay, but now the bridegroom wants to have no guests at all invited, and one can't very well leave one's kinsfolk on such an occasion as this, and I *have* asked Simon Petrovitch and Maria Petrovna to luncheon today.

Nurse. You're right, matushka: don't let people think that you're giving away your daughter on the quiet. Besides, we didn't begin the affair,

and we can't end it, and at any time a marriage is not a trifling business, and in any case our kinsfolk are as good as his. Let him take care that he doesn't end by getting his nose pulled! Why should *he* go playing the prince? God knows what he is!

Mar. Vas. Nurse, Nurse! You never miss a chance of railing at him, which you ought not to do—rather, you ought to remember that soon he will have become Liubochka's husband. For, anyhow, only a week of her is left to us now. But how she is in love with him! It is astonishing! Liubochka, Liubochka—before another twelve months are gone you yourself may have got a little Liubochka. Fancy it! No, Nurse: there must be no speaking against him, and all the less so because, as everyone agrees, he is a man of note, and knows everything, and has been everywhere, and has written books—not to mention that everyone at some time gets spoken against.

Nurse. Oh, never when Miss Liubochka is by do I say anything against him, but whenever she isn't it's only right that somebody should tip you a word, even if it's but myself. And I say that there's something wrong somewhere. For look, for instance, how he as good as says to us, "Who are *you*, you farmer lot?" Why should *he* lord it over your family! Because, forsooth, he's been in foreign parts? Why, there's not a

down-at-heel lady landowner in the country but has been there too! "I've travelled a bit. See what a fine fellow I am—what a marvel!" Look at Katenka as well. We've known her from babyhood, and can remember that she was always a dunce, and had neither good looks nor wit to help her out: yet now she is having bits of writing of hers put into print, just as, when the son of our deacon was expelled from school, he too set up to have his stuff printed in a book! Of course, one needn't feel surprised at *anything* in these times, but I tell you again that Liubochka's young man has neither wealth nor birth—only a father who is such a drunkard that the son won't have him about the place. And he himself has fine manners, to be sure! Aye, I tell you that no good can come of taking a fellow like that into our family, for it isn't as though this "new age" bridegroom of ours was going to bring us any property—no, we're going to get out of him just nothing at all, though once there was a time when that trick couldn't have been played twice.

Mar. Vas. Nurse, Nurse! Say no more about it! It is Providence's ordering.

Nurse. Well, I know that words won't mend matters, yet just for a moment—I kiss your dear hands and feet—listen to the humble advice of an old Maria who says, *Don't let this man have your property, or any of it, before the wedding*

day. And as the property's your own, nobody can order you about with it. Of course, let *her* have any presents you like—diamonds, bed linen, and all of the best possible quality: but wait before you let *him* have anything. As yet, you don't know anything about him for certain. Give yourself time to find out. Begin giving him things, and you'll soon have nothing left for yourself.

Mar. Vas. Dear Nurse, what ideas do get into your head! How can I do as you suggest?

Nurse. Listen again to an old fool. Follow her advice if you don't want harm to come of it. Let the pair live together for two months, or even six, whilst you watch and see whether he respects his mother-in-law. Then, but only then, let him have what property you mean him to have.

Mar. Vas. You silly, silly creature!

Nurse. At least it'll be better than giving him things at once, and then seeing him treat you rudely, and making Miss Liubochka's life a misery. He's said things against you already—he's about the same opinion of you that he has of this stocking. So for once in your life listen to an old dunderheaded Maria! If you don't, you'll regret it. An ell is near enough for a bite.

Mar Vas. I say that you are a silly: but still I *will* mention it to Ivan Mikhailovitch. He ought to be back very soon.

Scene 8

[Enter Liubov and Tverdinsky]

Tverd. [to Liubov] We have had quite a nice walk, haven't we?

Liubov. [to Mar. Vas.] Why are the others not back yet? I have been to meet them with Alexei Pavlovitch, but merely had my walk for nothing. And Alexei Pavlovitch would keep on talking nonsense all the time.

Tverd. Oh, I only made a little joke or two about rustic meetings, but otherwise the conversation flowed pleasantly enough.

Liubov. Yes, but why do you use so many affected expressions? They only annoy me. Do try to speak more naturally.

Tverd. Apparently my conversational powers fail to please. Well, let us go and have a swing, and I will impart to you the necessary impetus.

Mar. Vas. Should you like some luncheon, Alexei Pavlovitch?

Tverd. Yes, I should, thank you, though it is not important. Come along, Liubov Ivanovna, if you are not too disgusted with me.

Liubov. No; go by yourself, and annoy yourself. I have other things to do.

Tverd. Of course they are vastly important?

Liubov. They are. For one thing, I want to read

some articles which Nikolai Dmitrievitch has sent me. Why cannot you leave me alone? You vex me extremely.

Nurse [sotto voce] It seems that there's mischief afoot here as well.

Tverd. [to Liubov] With all deference to your sex, *you* annoy *me*.

Liubov. Come, come, Alexei Pavlovitch! Manners!

Mar. Vas. Yes, Alexei Pavlovitch. You ought not to speak to her like that.

Tverd. I have just been studying manners. I have been doing so with the help of a little book that was written by one Bielov in 1763, printed by one Sierkin, and entitled "Behaviour to the Fair Sex, or How to Become an Attractive Man."

Liubov. Mamma, send him away! Why does he keep running after me? Alexei Pavlovitch, it is lessons time for you now. Petrusha!

Petrusha. [answering from within] Well? What?

Liubov. Tell Alexei Pavlovitch that it is lessons time. Do go in, Alexei Pavlovitch. I find you tedious. I have spent the whole morning trying to get rid of you.

Tverd. [stiffly] Haven't you changed your attitude very suddenly—though I don't quite know why?

Liubov. I have changed it for no reason at all except that I am always glad when your back is turned.

Tverd. You used to be far more sociable?

Nurse. Sir, if I had been a mother, and you'd spoken to *my* daughter like that, *I'd* soon have "Petrusha'ed" you!

Mar. Vas. Nurse, Nurse! Do be quiet. You must have lost your wits. [To Tverd.] Why annoy Liubov? I beg of you to go to Petrusha. Then I will send you both some luncheon. I want to have a private talk with Liubov.

Tverd. [to himself] Hullo! This milk-fed old party too seems to be huffy! [To Mar. Vas.] I thank you. If even to lunch is not a crime, I gladly accept your offer. [Exit]

Petrusha. [calling from within] Mother! We have got wine and caviare!

Mar. Vas. Yes, I know, dear.

Scene 9

Liubov. Mamma, what am I to do when he plagues me so? I cannot abide him. Do make him leave me alone, as I am quite different from what I used to be.

Mar. Vas. I will see what I can do.—So today your fiancé is coming for the betrothal?

Nurse. Young lady, you never ought to have flirted with that young fellow at all. If you give a rascal like that only this much [Nurse holds up a little finger] he'll be for wanting the whole hand. Flirt, and there'll be neither priest

nor father. Aye, that's what may come of fooling.

Liubov. But, I've never even flirted with him, Nurse. It merely began with the three of us—Petrusha and him and myself—playing games together. For my part, I think him horrid, and scarcely ever speak to him—I spend most of my time in study, or else in reading the little books sent me by Nikolai Dmitrievitch. Yet he never will leave me alone!

Nurse. You should treat him more strictly. You're too easy. If I had had *my* way, the wretch would never even have set foot here, and, as it is, I intend to give him a good talking-to before I've done, and then your mother can dismiss me if she wants to. At least, he's afraid of *me.* Just let him try it on!

Liubov. Mamma, does Katenka know of my engagement? She doesn't, I suppose.

Mar. Vas. No, dear, she doesn't. The only people who know are your father and Nurse. Nikolai Dmitrievitch himself wished that. But today, of course, everyone is to learn of it.

Liubov. Why are the others not back? Somehow it seems strange that they are not. Oh! and isn't he good-looking? Don't *you* think so, Nurse?

Mar. Vas. Certainly he has a striking face.

Liubov. And so clever, too! You should hear him explaining things! But at least Katenka will be

angry when she hears of my engagement. Do you know, she *will* call me "undeveloped," though *I* think that I have developed a lot lately, and even Nikolai Dmitrievitch says that I have advanced during these last two weeks. Nurse, did you know that Katenka has long been in love with him? She has never said so, but I know that it is true.—Oh, here they come, here they come! Mamma, you are not to cry. No, nor are you either, Nurse. Nikolai Dmitrievitch doesn't like that sort of thing—he says that it is foolish and old-fashioned. When he and I are married we are going to have everything done on the new system. I feel so happy, so happy, so happy! *Isn't* he clever, Mamma?

Mar. Vas. May God send—send——

Nurse. That no evil befall us!

Liubov. No evil? Why, he is everything that is good!

Scene 10

[Enter Iv. Mikh., Vener., Bek., and Kat. Mat.]

Iv. Mikh. [putting forward Bek.] This is Bekletov, a friend of Nikolai Dmitrievitch's.

Mar. Vas. [to Bek.] I am very glad to meet you. [To Vener.] And how are *you,* Nikolai Dmitrievitch? Comment va votre santé? [She and Iv. Mikh. enter the house]

Kat. Mat. Where is Tverdinsky? [Tverd. issues from the house] Oh, there he is! Tverdinsky, I have something to say to you.

Tverd. But I am lunching with Petrusha?

Bek. [to Kat. Mat.] Introduce me to this tutor, will you?

Kat. Mat. Certainly. He is the one living personality in the place.

Bek. [shaking hands with Tverd.] I am charmed to meet you. Shall we go for a stroll? [He and Kat. Mat. and Tverd. walk away to a little distance]

Liubov. [to Vener.] Why are you so late? I have been so ennuyée all the time, although I have read your articles, and even understood them!

Vener. Excellent! On my side, I have been thinking over something. That something concerns you especially.

Liubov. What is it? I believe I know in advance.

Vener. I doubt that. However, it is all written down on this sheet of paper. [He offers her a sheet of paper]

Liubov. No! Tell it me. That will be much nicer.

Vener. Listen, then. In our last conversation I said that I believed one of our principal duties flowing from the new age to be the deliverance of woman from the barbaric slavery under which she has long lain crushed.

Liubov. I agree. But oughtn't she to be free also to take her husband on trial? That is an idea

which has just occurred to me. Suppose, for instance, that you were to grow tiresome, and I to fall out of love with you?

Vener. Ye-es. That *is* the way in which the great doctrine of feminine emancipation only too often becomes compromised on the lips of the many. The doctrine's nature, in reality, is different. Feminine freedom lies, first and foremost, in woman possessing equal rights with man, since she needs to have struck from her the leading-strings, firstly, of parents, and, secondly, of husband, so that she may stand upon her own feet, and look her fellows in the face.

Liubov. Yes, I quite understand that. But as I understand the new ideas so well, why does Katenka keep saying that I am "undeveloped" still?

Vener. Hm-m. To make myself clear is not easy. Perhaps I had better set forth the point concretely.

Liubov. Concretely, after that I have read your "Analogical Course" right through, and your "Ethics" as well? However, go on—explain to me.

Vener. I can best illustrate the nature of feminine freedom by taking ourselves as an example. If I were one of the effete individuals who rule this community, or one of your liberal-minded quidnuncs, I should imagine that marriage gave me certain rights over your person, and that you

became dependent upon me, and I upon you, so that neither of us could move a hand or a foot without the other. Thus, supposing that I were, for example, to fall sick, you, though detesting the very sight of a sick person, would still feel bound to remain in the sickroom. And supposing that both of us were to fall sick—to have, say, bilious attacks, both of us would still feel bound to endure our sufferings in company, and quarrel as a consequence. And supposing that I were to wish to use some of my money to purchase books with, or that you wished to use some of yours for purchases of, of——

Liubov. Of a sewing-machine and some household requisites (for I do mean to buy things like that when we are married, though not the dress of black velvet which I have long been pining for, even though dark materials suit me best)—Oh, what is it you were saying? I love to hear you speak!

Vener. That wedlock ought to confer full independence and liberty upon both of the contracting parties concerned, and not merely upon one of them.

Liubov. Yes, quite so. Fancy my being ordered about by you when I have had more than enough of that from my governesses! Do you know, you *never* can have seen such a woman as Sappa Karlovna! She was beyond describing.—No, if I had imagined that you

were to lord it over me I should never have let the idea of marrying you even enter my head, and so I feel all the more pleased to think that we are going to be, well, if not exactly separate, at all events standing upon equal rights. Oh, and another governess of ours, Natochka Zaitseva (her you *have* seen) used to say—for she was quite undeveloped, and used to spend most of her time reading novels—that one ought to marry only for love! As though one could love to order! And as though to pretend love were not worse than anything else! Whereas, if husband and wife possess equal rights, things are bound to go quite smoothly. What absurdities people do invent! To think of falling in love just when one likes!

Vener. True. But whereas love is only a name to women like your governess, it is your and my duty to order our lives in such a manner that mutual cramping of freedom shall be rendered impossible. So long as you and I may wish to live under the same roof we will live under the same roof; and when we grow temporarily weary of one another we will temporarily part company without imposing upon one another any conditions; and when—since social prejudice will never be allowed to overshadow our lives—the one or the other of us finally finds the arrangement irksome he or she will have the right to retire thence without reproach and with-

out ill-feeling. And though at first sight these things may strike you as novel, they also, you will discover, are perfectly simple.

Liubov. Yes, and lovely and delightful! Oh, I understand them perfectly, for all that you and Katenka think me so stupid, for I have been thinking things out for myself. I feel the more that I am not stupid because, if I really were stupid, I should be unable to grasp things as I do, and to foresee everything that you are going to say before even you have said it—yes, really! —down to each separate one of its words.

Vener. The simplicity of truth itself differentiates it from error: and as your nature is a discerning one, your consciousness should be able the more profoundly to absorb what is true.

Liubov. Yes. Do you know, already I am beginning to find the old system absurd. Let you and I cut out a line of our own, and model everything upon the new ideas, and then I shall love you more than ever.

Vener. You will render me the greatest possible obligation if you will continue to recognise how ridiculous is your environment, for you will next go on to recognise how odious also is that environment. And when you shall have perceived that fact, all will have become well with you. We and those who share our opinions conceive that the greatest of all obstacles to individual development is the institution of the family: and

this is a point which you, in view of your nature, ought eventually to apprehend with peculiar acuteness, seeing that, whereas you yourself are full of fair promise, those around you are people of the lowest possible mentality, and denizens of a social circle which contains only one really human personality, in the shape of Katerina Matveievna. True, at the moment even she is, for reasons known to us, adopting an attitude of hostility; but as for your other social associates, they are so much asphyxiating clay.

Liubov. But Papa understands us a little, and sympathises with us? Yes, and Mamma too—a little? And she is so kind, and has such a love for me! Besides, Papa really likes you. Yes, he likes you, really.

Vener. Nevertheless, it must be your fixed aim to dissociate yourself from these people, however much you love them. Let that be an understood thing between us, seeing that undesirable persons always do their best to hang on to the desirable. Why, for that matter, should you love the musty and the worthless? March ahead always. March ahead.

Liubov. [suddenly vexed] I do not like that kind of talk. No, I don't.

Vener. I repeat that you must school yourself to regard these people as strangers. What possible attraction can they have for you?

Liubov. I repeat that I do not like that kind of talk. If you persist in it I shall be falling out of love again with the new ideas, and arranging that our life after marriage shall be lived after a fashion of my own, and not of yours—in which case you will have only yourself to thank.

Vener. How, in such a case, would you order our lives?

Liubov. Well, first of all we should take a nice house in Moscow, and then I should have one dress of black velvet for myself, and one of white. And every morning we should go for a drive. And every afternoon we should go (I in my black velvet, of course) to a pit-tier box at one of the theatres. And every evening we should go (after that I had changed into my dress of white velvet) to a ball at my godfather's. And lastly, every evening, we should go home together, to talk (for I should never so much as look at a book, or let you look at one) and make love. And that love I should want all the time—I should never give you a rest from it, or let my ordering of our way of life leave a thought for anything else. For that was how Mamma was, and I am very like her. Think how delicious it would be! Just picture it!

Vener. You say that you would do all this if I went on talking like——?

Liubov. Yes, or in any case, for I am very angry with you.

Vener. So you love me so much as that?

Liubov. I do; but only when you are good. In any case you are the first sweetheart that I have ever had—yes, except, just for a little, one other man who needn't be counted.

Vener. [smiling, and taking her hand with a vague idea of kissing it] But to live as you describe would cost much money. More: it would mean a throwing overboard of principles.

Liubov. Nonsense! [Raising the hand of hers which he is holding, she lays it upon his lips] to talk like that is nonsense.

Vener. [trying to embrace her] My little——!

Liubov. And to talk like that is nonsense too. Somehow you make it sound awkward and foolish.

Vener. Then you do not like it? Well, I will try something else.

Liubov. Yes, somehow you make it sound clumsy and wrong. It must be that you've never *learnt* to talk it. [Bursting out laughing] Really I believe that I shall have to teach you. On the other hand, though you are bad at——

Vener. How bewitching you look! I cannot deny that this is a pleasant enough episode from the hedonistic point of view—perhaps imbecile a little, but—— So you really admire me?

Liubov. I do. But why walk always as though your feet hurt you?

Vener. [offended] Oh, all this is badinage. We must take a more serious view of life, and, meanwhile, stroll round the garden.

Liubov. Very well. [Just as they are starting they are met by Bek.]

Bek. [to Vener., sotto voce] It's all right, brother! Katerina Matveievna is so smitten with the tutor that already they're inseparable.

Scene 11

[Enter Iv. Mikh. and Mar. Vas.]

Iv. Mikh. [to Bek.] I am very glad that Nikolai Dmitrievitch has made you his deputy for his money affairs. I will explain them to you, and then you can transmit them to him. His feelings in the matter are perfectly intelligible. It is inevitable that a man of such delicacy and loftiness of mind should——

Bek. Let me respond frankly to your frankness, and say that, though personally I am practical of bent, I share your sympathy with my friend's distaste for business conversations. His misfortune is that he belongs to that numerous type which, though excellent of heart, is apt to misinterpret.

Iv. Mikh. Yes; quite so. Well, let us have our talk out before the other guests arrive. Liubov's property devolves to her from her mother.

Mar. Vas. [interposing] It does, Jean, et j'espère

que vous ne déciderez rien sans moi, seeing that I am the mother, and the property, therefore, is mine.

Iv. Mikh. [in some surprise] But what do you mean, Maria Vasilievna? Surely you are not unwell? So far as you and I are concerned, this matter stands discussed.

Mar. Vas. [beginning to lose her temper] It does, but, for all that, I repeat that, as I am the mother, I ought to be given the preference in consultation over a perfect stranger. Yet here you sit talking to a gentleman as though I had possessed not a single groat—paying me about as much attention as if I had been a stocking! And what I particularly want to say is that, as the property is mine, not a jot of it shall go to anyone at all until I choose that it shall. Before it goes to anyone you will have to obtain my consent. Les convenances l'exigent. Demandez à monsieur.

Iv. Mikh. This I had not anticipated. But what exactly is the point? Had you not better go indoors, and think it over again? For you are speaking, remember, before a third person.

Mar. Vas. I am aware of that—as aware of it as I am aware that *you* are speaking without thinking. Certain things have come to my knowledge, and, amongst others, a report that not enough is known about Nikolai Dmitrievitch's antecedents.

Iv. Mikh. That not enough is known about his antecedents? Oh, rubbish, rubbish!

Bek. All this is, if I may say so, just a little strange.

Mar. Vas. Perhaps it is, but, to tell the truth, I could no longer contain myself, now that everyone is saying that I am the least-considered person in the house. In fact, I have half a mind altogether to upset the marriage.

Iv. Mikh. But why should you do any such thing? Where is the necessity?

Mar. Vas. What I have said: namely, that now I know certain things about Nikolai Dmitrievitch. Oh, I do not wish to speak ill of him just for the sake of doing so—je n'ai pas de dent contre lui. All that I say—you may consider it my whim if you like—is that I will not have my property, or any portion of it, pass to him before the wedding day. The wedding must first be celebrated, and by that time he will have been able to show us whether or not he is going to be a good son-in-law—when the matter can again be considered, and finally decided upon. Literary men are only too——

Iv.Mikh. [peremptorily, and taking her by the hand] Come, come! Suppose we go and re-discuss the matter elsewhere?

Mar. Vas. [turning red] No, no, Jean! After all, you need not pay me any attention, and there is nowhere else for us to go. Laissez-moi en repos, au nom du ciel, and I will say no more.

Iv. Mikh. [to Bek.] Well, you have seen this strange behaviour of my wife's, but pray understand that there is nothing in it, nor yet mention it to Nikolai Dmitrievitch.

Bek. Yes, I do understand what you say, and [this to himself more meaningly] understand it only too well!

Scene 12

[Enter two guests, a lady and a gentleman. At some distance behind come Liubov and Vener.]

Gent. Guest. We have only just heard of the affair. It was *so* unexpected, but I congratulate you most heartily.

Lady Guest. For your sake particularly, Maria Vasilievna, am I delighted.

Iv. Mikh. We thank you, we thank you.

Mar. Vas. Even to ourselves the affair came as a surprise. And here is the bridegroom himself, and his fiancée as well, so we can introduce you to him.

Vener. [halting at the sight of the guests, and scowling] Yes, Liubov, more than ever do I feel that I must continue the work which I have taken in hand, and ruthlessly rescue you from this social slough before you succumb to its odious and most abhorrent vacuity. See, at this

very moment, the real implication of that vacuity! For here am I supposed to make the acquaintance of people like *those!*

Liubov. Will it hurt you so very much to know them?

Iv. Mikh. [to Vener.] My wife's uncle. My cousin. All of you become acquainted.

Gent. Guest. [offering to shake hands with Vener.] It is with pleasure that I greet my future relative, and offer him my felicitations.

Lady Guest. It is with pleasure that for the first time I meet one of whom I have heard so much. Liubov, you are indeed fortunate! [Vener. clasps his hands behind his back, bows stiffly, and turns away. He is joined by Bek.]

Gent. Guest. Dear, dear! How *very* rude of him!

Lady Guest. Indeed yes—a most extraordinary way for a future relative to behave!

Vener. [to Bek.] They and their handshakings can go to the devil! I have only given them a well-deserved snub—a snub which they knew they deserved. [He engages in further conversation with Bek.]

Iv. Mikh. [to his guests] Pray come in to the drawing-room. It is nearly luncheon time. The engaged couple make a handsome picture, do they not?

Gent. Guest. Ye-es. Have you yet succeeded in finding another steward?

Iv. Mikh. Oh, do not speak of that affair! It

worries me intensely. [Exeunt all except Vener. and Bek.]

Scene 13

Bek. The affair of the Dudkina woman is going splendidly. First of all I sprinkled incense upon her and the tutor; and then I made her an avowal of love on his behalf; and then I laid them in one another's arms. So that at least the woman may be said to be snared. The unfortunate part of the business is the money business, which has gone anything but well, through the mother wishing to ride you on the curb until she may have discerned your merits as a son-in-law. However, to give him his due, the father has behaved quite with some decency.

Vener. Yes, the father does pay me some homage, and I can forgive him much for that.

Bek. Ye-es—though I should have preferred to be able to feel sure that the homage was genuine, and not to have my expert eye seeming to detect ready-rehearsal scenes, and only externally imbecile parents, and, in short, a reproduction of the old device of the "harsh" partner whom no one ever sees, but is for ever placing obstacles in the way of the "kindly" member of the firm. However, the birds will yet be trapped.

Vener. Possibly they will: yet the affair is becom-

ing a trifle unpleasant. Only a few moments ago, though the financial matters are not yet settled, I had to bear a part in the first piece of these people's silly ceremonial.

Bek. I sympathise with you. Yet that ceremonial does not bind you to anything, does it? The truth is that your "idealistic" self is plunged in its usual doubts as to whether it may not be doing something wrong all the time. Well, disabuse yourself of that idea, and remember, with regard to these people, that we are bound to no standard whatever either of "honourable" or of "dishonorable," and that unless you keep that rule fixed firmly before you, you will be fooled every time. View things quite simply. Had you to extricate a friend from a den of thieves, should you begin by considering whether an outwitting of the rascals was a crime? Well, treat these folk similarly, for the marriage is merely a business affair, and I venture to prophesy that before tonight your humble friend will have netted for you two arrogant parents. Yes, you need have no fear as to that, or that you will not see the brace netted in good style. And, now that I have pledged my word, come—march! [Exeunt towards the house, into whose lower windows all the servants are peeping]

Scene 14

[Enter Kat. Mat. and Tverd.]

Tverd. Hullo! What does the commotion mean? Something improper being perpetrated?

Kat. Mat. No. Merely that a well-known exponent of the doctrine of feminine emancipation is being betrothed to an insignificant, wholly undeveloped personality. Verily, a fine exhibition of moral flaccidity!

Tverd. Surprising, I agree.

Kat. Mat. [joining the servants in peeping through the windows] And now people are blessing the couple, and kneeling down about them!—But there! The spectacle is too sordid, too horribly degrading to our human dignity, to bear contemplation!

Tverd. [joining her] Ye-es. So much for *half*-development added to a "liberal-minded" exciseman!

Kat. Mat. [peeping again] And now the couple are actually kissing one another! What purely animal behaviour—almost enough to make one despair of truth and progress! However, all such things lie below me, and as regards yourself, Tverdinsky, do let it be a lesson to you to remain what you are now—the only really pure, honourable, and respect-worthy personality amongst this rabble.

Tverd. Oh that there were more women of your sort—although for the moment these people do seem to have gained a trick!

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene 1

[Present in the drawing-room, on the wedding morning, Iv. Mikh., Mar. Vas., Nurse, and a stout, bewhiskered kinsman named Nikolaev who is also a prominent landowner.]

Iv. Mikh. I suppose the young bride is dressing? Yes, quite so, quite so. The appointed hour, seven o'clock, has nearly arrived.

Nikolaev. Friend Ivan, only my affection for you has led me to give this marriage my countenance —for your sake alone have I done so. For, as you know, I dislike the man. Merely look at his manners! Twice have I and my family sat expecting him to a meal, and not seen so much as the tip of his nose! What can one make of that? Again, though he is a bridegroom-elect, neither he nor his relatives seem to have been able to call upon the bride's kinsfolk. Is it that he despises us? Is that the reason?

Iv. Mikh. My dear fellow, he has no relatives to speak of; and though I myself admit that I have found the task of having to provide everything, and to see to everything, no joke, and that the end of it is not in sight, it would only cause trouble for us to set about teaching him etiquette at this time of day. Besides, for all your good nature, you are apt to be over-suspicious.

Nikolaev. No, no, Ivan! You cannot excuse him like that. Why, another night, he caused dinner to be put back until six o'clock, though it would have been easy for him to have sent us word that he was too proud to know us, and saved us from sitting two hours at table, and then having to dine off warmed-up dishes. Waiting about like that is not to my taste.

Iv. Mikh. But another explanation is possible. Personally I believe it to be that he is afraid of being turned in a show—talented and notable though he is. Make his acquaintance, and very likely you will alter your opinion. I too, after first meeting him, used to say hard things about him—only to find, after all, that his complaint was excessive constraint. And remember that we are living in an age whose conditions differ greatly from those of the old, and already have rendered some of our ancient observances obsolete.

Nikolaev. Yet mark my words when I say that to-day some sort of a scandal is going to occur.

Besides, how can you explain the fact that yesterday we had to wait for luncheon until three o'clock, and to eat sodden pancakes? Not a word of what I have said do I withdraw. [He leads Iv. Mikh. aside] By the way, haven't you offended him over the dowry? Now, tell me the truth about it. Are you, or are you not, going to give him anything? And, if so, has it yet been given?

Iv. Mikh. I am only telling you the truth when I say that he has not asked me for a single kopek, and that as soon as I broached the question he refused to discuss it, and that when I returned to it a second time he once more replied that he wanted nothing. True, later, owing to a fuss on my wife's part, I decided to wait, and made him aware that though I intended eventually to apportion Liubov the Volokolamskoe property, I should not hand him the conveyance deeds of that property before the wedding day, or the day after it—my idea being meanwhile to note his behaviour towards Maria: but otherwise the dowry is in order.

Nikolaev. Nowadays young men hanker after property equally with their elders—especially after hard cash: and that is not a good sign. Mind that he doesn't play you some trick.

Iv. Mikh. Oh, absurd, absurd! No such thing! But what twenty-year-old hock I am going to give you at the breakfast today! *Such* hock it is!

Nikolaev. Meanwhile, please post me in the day's procedure. For I suppose it is all settled? Begin from the point of our escorting the bride to the "crown."

Iv. Mikh. Well, as soon as the ceremony is over, you and the rest—in fact, all except myself and Maria Vasilievna, the bride's parents—will proceed to the bridegroom's flat, where you should be given tea (with fruit and sweetmeats for the young ladies), and cupfuls of soup, and snacks of fish, or anything else such as a bachelor household can be expected to provide. And, beyond all things, champagne. And when that is over you will return to breakfast here, and see the young couple off (for it will be from here that the final departure will be made), and drink their healths (how you will enjoy the bouquet of my hock—good Hungarian stuff which my father bought straight from the growers in '45!), and when the carriage has been ordered, help to stow the couple and the gift deeds inside, and, last of all, send them away with God's blessing and our own.

Nikolaev. Well, for my part I consider that going-away custom a foolish one, even though it does hail from England. Usually customs invented by the English are customs of merit: but this one emphatically is not so. For *why* should the couple depart immediately after the ceremony? For people who possess travelling-carriages, and

can provide a maid for the bride, and so forth, the custom may be well enough; but what of couples who have to depart in tilt-wagons, and without a maid? Never mind: even before the bride has had time to pull herself together we shout at her, "Now, then! Off, and be sharp about it!" Which is absurd.

Iv. Mikh. But how can we help ourselves if it is the fashion—and, for that matter, a better fashion, in some respects, than you think? [Enter a footman with a basketful of plate and china] Hullo, why, I sent those things to the bridegroom's place only an hour ago, in case his establishment, like those of most bachelors, should be not over-well supplied with such articles. [To the footman] What is it?

Footman. The people at the house said that the things were not wanted.

Iv. Mikh. *Who* said that?

Footman. The people at the house. They sent me out word that "We do not want the things. You can take them back again."

Iv. Mikh. [to Nikolaev] So you see that, for one thing he has got every possible requisite—probably laid by a store of such things, as everyone in his position is bound to do. [Enter a maid] [To the maid] Will the bride soon be ready?

Maid. Yes, sir. She is dressing her hair. [Exit]

Nikolaev. All the same, has he given her any pres-

ents—diamonds, or shawls, or what not—such as are customary?

Iv. Mikh. N-no; but in these days, who gives presents, and therefore why should *he?* "Let love, not a gift, be your beloved." But he has, I understand, given her a pair of scissors.

Nikolaev. Then if today doesn't see some scandal occur I give you leave to spit in my face. For what sort of a way of doing things is *that?* People don't get married every day of their lives, and though one mayn't feel very cheerful about it oneself, at least one should try to hearten one's bride. Yet look at Nikolai Dmitrievitch's sort of heartening—a pair of scissors, price twenty kopeks! What can one make of *that*—courting a lady with a pair of—— Ah! Here comes the best man.

Iv. Mikh. [to the best man] I suppose the bridegroom is nearly ready? We at least are. [He calls aloud] Liubochka! Are you nearly dressed?

Liubov. [from within] Yes, Papa. In one moment.

The Best Man. Just as I left Nikolai Dmitrievitch he was putting on his peajacket.

Iv. Mikh. Putting on his—his *peajacket?* Good Lord! Off you go, and tell him that his bride is being married in white. Hurry, oh hurry! [Exit the best man]

Nikolaev. I *told* you that something scandalous would occur.

Scene 2

[Enter Liubov and some lady guests]

Liubov. Papa, do you think I look nice?

First L. G. How the fleurs d'orange in your wreath become you! Please give me one.

Liubov. Each of you shall have one.

Second L. G. But why that scarf of the bridegroom's?

Third L. G. Yes, how can you? Colour on your wedding day!

First L. G. But if the bridegroom is going to be married in a peajacket——?

Second L. G. Is he *really?*

Liubov. Let me go and look at myself in that mirror, to see how the scarf suits me, for he particularly asked me to wear it. [She looks at her reflection] No, no! I simply cannot. It shall go into my pocket.

Best Man. Is everyone ready? Each of you now salute the bride, and give her your blessing.

Nikolaev. [kissing Liubov] May God go with you!—How nice you look! [There ensues a general round of kissings and congratulatings, whilst some of the lady guests shed tears]

Scene 3

[Enter Kat. Mat. and Tverd. They halt and stand in silence.]

Iv. Mikh. [to Liubov] And I too say, may God go with you!—Enough, now! Enough, Nurse! You are making a fool of yourself.

Nurse. [weeping] But to think that I shall never see my little beauty again!

Liubov. [to the best man] I shall not need you to crown me, as Petrusha is going to do it.

Mar. Vas. But that will be when you have taken your place on the carpet. Are the candles ready? Nurse, here is the money for you to throw under the bride's and the bridegroom's feet.

Nurse. It shall be done.

Nikolaev. [sotto voce] I can see all the omens of a scandal gathering apace!

Iv. Mikh. Thank goodness, everything is now in order, though we need not yet bid the couple farewell. [Exeunt all in single file except Kat. Mat. and Tverd.]

Scene 4

Kat. Mat. I say again that there are people who, so far from having the new ideas graven into

their flesh and blood, merely carry those ideas faintly scratched upon their consciousnesses' exterior. And so it is with Nikolai Dmitrievitch. I have been gravely mistaken in him.

Tverd. Our Professor of Psychology at the University used to say, "So long as one believes not in the false, one cannot fall into error," and I have always recognized that the personality mentioned was a personality without merit.

Kat. Mat. But allow me to ask for an explanation of the following phenomenon. Submission to the attraction of the flesh is, as you and every thinking personality are aware, only one of our human nature's many manifestations of its own debasement: and for that very reason how comes it that a certain personality fails to realise that fleshly attraction's falsity, and therefore the measure of his fall—how comes he to forget that, once a human being enters within a retrograde circle, and succumbs to that circle's superstition and decay, he can never again issue thence? To Venerovsky the true nature of feminine emancipation is well known. Hence one might have assumed that——

Tverd. From the first the fellow's principles showed me that he was but a "seignior": from the first I took stock of his personality, and saw that he was counterfeit. What else was to be expected of an exciseman drawing two thousand roubles a year, and keeping a flat and a riding horse?

How could such a man be new in actuality, be anything but a new "seignior"? Why, I have heard him call us university students "boys," and that alone shows his notions to be just as much dross as those of all the rest of the circle. For myself, I hate the place, and wish to go back to Moscow.

Kat. Mat. Yes, your fine, independent judgement was bound from the first to divine his nature. I myself can recall his saying that development of a power of reflection in the young could never do them an injury! The truth is that he is beneath our notice, and more than ever so now that he is being put through the paltry ceremony of being wedded to a paltry personality.

Tverd. Ye-es. But the girl is not bad-looking, and if her personality's potentialities had not been clipped by her social surroundings it might have developed into something. Well, as I say, I wish I could return to Moscow, for life here is tedious. At least, in Moscow, I could attend lectures, and do some work, and so forth.

Kat. Mat. Allow me, allow me! Moscow has in it not a single professor who is worth listening to. All the professorial staff there is undeveloped—otherwise I too should have gone to Moscow (in default of St. Petersburg) long ago, and taken a physiology course, so wholly do I share your feelings about this environment. But, as it is, I could not possibly attend a lecture either

in the one city or in the other, for in both the universities are undeveloped.

Tverd. Nevertheless, at any university one could at least have sentient personalities for companions instead of decaying organisms.

Kat. Mat. Well, you might be happier in Moscow. but what about myself? How am I who am a woman to order my life as I please? The idea of going to a university has occurred to me more than once, in the hope that at all events it might increase my stock of positive knowledge as to the new conditions to which we are gradually ascending: but even at a university there would uprise before the advanced woman the old difficulty, the difficulty of discovering a road on which she could walk without at once falling crushed beneath the old incubus of prejudice, stagnancy and reaction. Nevertheless, in no case can I remain here, for here I can feel all those liberal and honourable powers which are the sources of my natural strength to be drooping and dying. So what is to be done? You who are broad-minded, and still fresh and uncorrupted, you who are clearer-sighted than I, do you now save an emancipated woman, a woman who, perhaps, is the only really emancipated woman in all this land, from the fate that is menacing her! Yes, I *know* myself to be perishing; I *know* the light of superiority to superstition which has ever been my life's guide

to be undergoing extinction; I *know* the blow struck me by that man to have stunned my last reserves of truth and progress, and left them reeling. So save me, Tverdinsky! You are still human and unsullied. Save me!

Tverd. [half-touched] What a noble personality is yours!

Kat. Mat. Ah, but allow me! I am, as I say, perishing: and if I should perish, then all these people will be able triumphantly to say, "See the woman who aspired to be free! Why, she is no different from the rest of us!" And they would be so delighted! So advise me, my comrade. Only you, amongst this herd, stand worthy of respect.

Tverd. [pressing her hand] I had never before realised what you really are, but imagined that you were a personality into whom the new ideas had penetrated but superficially. Now, however, I discern the loftiness and the sincerity of your convictions in all their plenitude.

Kat. Mat. [returning his hand-clasp so warmly as almost to hurt him] Yes, I have thought much, and suffered much. And even if I did not hate retrogression for its own sake, I could not retreat from my position, since I am wholly of the new ideas, and progressive in a ratio to which no halt could be called. That is why, permeated in all my being with a respect for your personality, I now stand before you, and beg of

you to tell me of a retreat in which I may be able to breathe more easily, and escape suffocation through my environment. To your advice I would listen. I stand awaiting it.

Tverd. [after some thought] It happens that I do know of a social circle in which you might assume your proper place in life, a circle that would just be the place for you. Yet even there, I fear, you might be tempted to let obstacles deflect you from the onward road.

Kat. Mat. Oh, but allow me, allow me! Why do you say that?

Tverd. Let me explain. In times past I used to find life difficult even in Moscow, since I lacked private means, had no permanent paid employment, and lay under the necessity of having to walk from lecture-room to lecture-room, to listen to chatter from imbecile-faced professors, and to endure a weariness almost equal to that induced in me by my present task of bearleading this overfed squirelet. But not long ago, whilst thinking of how best I could alter my mode of life, I happened to hear of a social circle organized by certain personalities in St. Petersburg for the purpose of forming themselves into what has since become known to the world as "The Commune." And of that Commune I too desire to become a member.

Kat. Mat. [seizing his hand] Tell me about it, Tverdinsky! Tell me *all* about it! I feel cer-

tain that it includes just the human type which I find most congenial. I am trembling, trembling with excitement! Save me from this present environment!

Tverd. Then listen. One of the members of that Commune happens to be a friend of mine, and, à propos, is an ex-seminarist (and I need hardly tell you that ex-seminarists as good as rank with the official class, as well as possess a monopoly of brain and talent), and first attained prominence in the literary world through his review of "The Siskins," a review entitled "Oh, underrate not the Siskin!" and summarising the intellectual progress achieved in seminarist establishments. Possibly you have read it?

Kat. Mat. I *have* read it. It is splendid, glorious, magnificent!

Scene 5

[Enter, unobserved, Petrusha, who halts and stands listening.]

Tverd. [continuing] Well, this friend of mine writes to me that at first the Commune consisted of three members only—of a medical man, of an indeterminate member, and of a student, and that the Commune's essential feature was intended to be common life—the three members of it sharing board, rent, incomings, outgoings,

and a living-room in common, but reserving separate rooms, each, for their individual studies. And with these three members there were to live three women, one of whom was to act as the Commune's housekeeper, and the other two to work at literary tasks, but with both them and the male members left wholly unfettered with sex restrictions, and wedlock ignored, and purely emancipated relations alone observed. Wherefore the affair began only in a small way. But now, my friend writes to me, the membership has increased to eighteen, and probably will increase still further. The significance of the enterprise you cannot fail to perceive. True, says my friend, points of friction do occasionally arise: but almost as soon as they arise those points tend to disappear, and to leave prevailing as before a communal spirit which well-nigh surpasses belief—so much so that never has a member been an inmate for long before he or she becomes quite a different person.

Kat. Mat. You say that the women of the Commune are free in every way?

Tverd. I do. Of course, official interference sometimes threatens—no institution of the kind could fail to evoke certain repercussions; but at all events the features which I have described constitute the general lines on which the project has been conceived, and on which I myself desire to live. Vastly preferable they must be to the

task of teaching this bloated young squirelet! But my misfortune is that I have no private means, and it is for the same reason that hitherto I have kept the subject of the Commune strictly to myself, as too delicate for discussion in this circle, and at this moment been induced to reveal it even to yourself only through a realisation, at last, that genuine convictions, and not transient emotions, are your mainspring.

Kat. Mat. [clapping her hands hysterically to her head] The scheme is magnificent, magnificent! Three cheers, yes, three cheers, I say, for the Commune, for that great, that marvellous idea! At last is true progress dawning in Russia! Tverdinsky, I am yours, I am yours!

Tverd. The noble nature of you! How instinctively have you divined the utility of the enterprise! How unswerving now is your belief in that utility!

Kat. Mat. To the Commune, to the Commune we will go! Yes, without losing an instant do you write to your friend that two more candidates are offering themselves. And not only will I take with me to the Commune what ready money I have in hand, but also I will write to Ivan Mikhailovitch that my lands are to be sold, and the proceeds of them sent after me. At the Commune I shall, of course, resume work upon my treatise on the importance of women engaging

in intellectual activity. And oh, Tverdinsky, do assure me, do assure me, that never will you go back upon our principles.

Tverd. If ever I were to do so I should lose my self-respect. So let us start at once—the sooner the better.

Kat. Mat. Very well. But first I must go and write my letter to Ivan Mikhailovitch. I would rather do that than see him personally, and in any case a letter can say as well as I can all that is required.

Tverd. There is only one other point. I am owing Ivan Mikhailovitch thirty roubles.

Kat. Mat. Well, thirty roubles are beyond me at the moment, but I will authorise Ivan Mikhailovitch to cancel the debt against the proceeds of the sale of my lands—if that will do?

Tverd. Excellent! You see, so important is our contemplated step that every distraction from it ought first to be cleared out of the way. Our end is one which justifies any and every means. [At this point Petrusha reveals himself]

Petrusha. Let me say that I am *not* a "bloated young squirelet." No, I am a full-grown man, and one who realises his destiny in life as much as you do. And as that is so, you are making a great mistake in what you suppose.

Tverd. I assure you that your name never once passed my lips!

Petrusha. O-o-oh! That is—that is mean, not to

say shabby, of you! The important point, however, is that I can no longer remain at home, for I have been thinking over my position, and come to realize that the chief obstacle to individual development is the family. True, my father is planning to send me back to school; but I do not intend to go. No, I now stand too fully developed for that, and, on reading Boklia, have found that he says the same things as I do, and so intend to go with you to St. Petersburg.

Tverd. Oh, you will only get yourself into an awful row. Besides, they won't let you go.

Petrusha. No longer am I a boy! And, if you really want to know, I have spoken about it to my father already—I did so as soon as ever he mentioned my going back to school. So now I intend to please myself, and go and live in St. Petersburg.

Tverd. I repeat that you will only get yourself into a row, and do yourself no good. We simply *cannot* take you.

Petrusha. Now, I have overheard the whole of your talk, and just *intend* to go and join the Commune, and study natural science in it. The goad of parental authority has become unbearable.

Tverd. You do not know what you are talking about. You are too young to go.

Kat. Mat. [interposing] Tverdinsky, Tverdinsky! Do not forget your own principles. Never at any time have we the right to crush youthful

aspirations for greater scope and freedom. Peter Ivanovitch, I will make a point of proposing you for membership in person.

Petrusha. Katerina Matveievna, I respect you! When are you going to start? Today? Well, I will pack my things, and then take a last look at Venerovsky's silly ceremonial, so as to make myself all the more keen to get clear of the place.

Tverd. [to Kat. Mat.] But *how* can we take him? He is too young.

Kat. Mat. Human beings are equal, and human beings are free. I too will go and pack my things, and see to my letter. Peter Ivanovitch, do you, meanwhile, write your father a full exposition of your convictions.

Petrusha. I will. I have thought them all out thoroughly, and especially the bit about the family being the chief—— [Exeunt before Petrusha has finished delivering himself of his harangue]

Scene 6

[A room in Vener.'s small and untidy flat. Present, Bekletov, a kinsman of Vener.'s (elderly and be-ribanded—a sort of Civil Service official), the caretaker, and a footman from the Pribyshevs', who is packing up a few articles.]

Kinsman. My dear Arkady Vasilievitch, are the married couple really going to depart with no more luggage than this? Why, to do so seems hardly decent!

Bek. They have been left no choice in the matter, for they are to return straight from the church, snatch up a wrap or two, and be off. Incidentally, let me tell you—not for the first time—that Nikolai Dmitrievitch will be anything but pleased if he finds you here. Of course, if the wedding had been a state affair, things might have been different; but, as it is, he desires complete quiet.

Kinsman. Well, I will go. Yet I do not quite see how I can altogether ignore my nephew before the bride's family. Had he merely been his ne'er-do-weel of a brother, or even a man like my father-in-law, things would have been easier; but—well, please remember that I am a Collegiate Councillor, and known in this neighbourhood. It will be very awkward for me to let my nephew depart without any notice on my part.

Bek. Yes, but do remember that this wedding is not a mere tradesman's affair, but, rather, a fashionable function from which the couple are going to step straight into their travelling-coach. [To the footman] Is everything packed now? Don't forget to put the keys into the carriage-pocket. And are the travelling-candles ready? Oh, the

numberless things that I have to think of! Take that bag downstairs. [To the kinsman] My good sir, I say again that you are only in the way. And why on earth are you wearing a starched collar, not to mention a riband, when I myself, as you can see, have got on only a pea-jacket to match the bridegroom's?

Kinsman. Well, go I will, save that I would ask you first to tell me whether Kolia has been given any dowry.

Bek. "Kolia"? "Kolia"? Do you mean Nikolai Dmitrievitch, a man of thirty-five? No. No dowry at all,[1] for he went to extreme care to do himself out of it.

Kinsman. Come, come! You must be joking? Possibly you and those who think as you do do not set very much store by kinship; but at least that is the case with us older folk, and therefore I would ask you to tell me the exact truth, and explain how a man so well-off as Ivan Mikhailovitch has failed to give Kolia a dowry.

Bek. [standing immediately in front of the kinsman] For goodness' sake stop shouting our private affairs to the public at large! The story of Nikolai Dmitrievitch's wilful self-defraudment is this. Two months ago, when the general announcement was made, "Kolia's" future father-in-law broached discussion of the finan-

[1] It will be remembered that Venerovsky was to be handed the property deeds only after completion of the wedding ceremony.

cial arrangements, and had all his proposals declined by our excessively delicate "idealist."

Kinsman. Dear, dear! The folly of it!

Bek. And though, ever since then I and my friends have been hoping against hope, and trying to bring "Kolia" to a realisation of his predicament, we have never been able to get him to go beyond either "I cannot stoop so low, for I have a reputation to keep up, and think more of my bride than of any dowry," or "Wait until the wedding has actually come off." You see, the idiot's obsession is that in this new age of ours there are going to disappear both money and the need of it. Well, the former at all events, thanks to his "fastidiousness," has become lost to him. Wait? Yes, he'll have to wait with a vengeance!

Scene 7

[Enter the newly-married couple and some of the wedding guests.]

Vener. [to his kinsman] Why are *you* here with your importunate "good wishes"? Goodness! As though I had asked you to come!

Kinsman. Well, Kolia; at least those good wishes come from the heart. [Lowering his voice] I have just been told that your chance of a dowry has——

Vener. Then you have been told so much rubbish. And in any case I would have taken her *without* a dowry. Her idiotic relatives can go to the devil!

Scene 8

[Enter Petrusha]

Petrusha. [to Vener.] Nikolai Dmitrievitch, I should like to say that though you now rank as my "brother," I look upon you as an ordinary human being.

Vener. Excuse me, but you might drop that silliness. What is it you want?

Petrusha. This. My father wishes you and Liubov to return to his place for breakfast and his final blessing. But for my part I hope that you *won't* return, as I consider all such things foolishness, and decline to take any part in them. Besides, I too am just off.

Vener. Very well. [He goes and joins Bek.]

Bek. [to Vener.] Didn't I tell you how it would be? That is always the way when you "idealists" ignore us practical folk. And next? You have a wife, and no money.

Vener. These people are brute beasts!

Bek. They are: but I have not yet played all my hand. Suppose you go back to the old man for

breakfast, and tackle him again? Yes, there are just these two courses: either that you try wheedling, and see what comes of it, or that you make up your mind permanently to keep your wife on short commons. Make your choice.

Vener. Nevertheless I don't quite see why you should altogether "manage" me. If it must be "Choose the one thing or the other," then I choose to depart as I am, and as quickly as possible. I presume that everything is ready for doing so?

Bek. Everything—down to the very cording and sealing! Will you have a tarantass, or shall I order you a coach?

Vener. A *coach?* What have I to do with coaches? Let poor men like myself cut their cloth on "modest, but honourable," lines. [Lighting a cigarette, he falls to pacing the room]

A Guest. Why is the bridegroom looking so gloomy?

Second Guest. Yes, why? Shall we go and offer him our congratulations?

Third Guest. No—perhaps we had better wait a little, rather than seem to be intruding.

Fourth Guest. At least let us ask for some champagne.

Nikolaev. How nice the bride looks—how very nice! [He approaches her, and lays his hands upon her head] Once more, the best of wishes! I shall be returning to your father's presently,

and shall look to see you and your husband soon follow me. [To himself] Oh, the poor little woman!

Liubov. One moment! Kolia, shall we return to Papa's for the wedding breakfast?

Vener. *Do* not call me "Kolia"! Is sounds so indescribably absurd!

Liubov. Oh, Nikolai! You must be out of spirits—even as I am. Yet I had scarcely expected to hear *that* from you!

Vener. [forcing a smile] Never mind. Do not notice me. [He takes a seat beside her] It is only the fuss, and all that. I shall be better presently. Yet what conceivable thing can these imbecile guests possibly be wanting?

Liubov. How could they not be here, seeing that they are in every case either relatives or intimate friends? There are a great many, too, whom we have offended outright by not inviting them. Well, let us go back to Papa's now, and take our departure from there. To think of that fortnight—a whole fortnight abroad!

Vener. Neither will I return to your father's nor will I go abroad. I beg that you will not make me lose my temper. What can come of our returning to your father's? As it is, this ceremonial has been too much for me. Surely you do not suppose that I want any *more* of it? Oh, I feel wretched!

Liubov. And *I?*

Vener. The same as I, I imagine. [The best man approaches him]

Best Man. Nikolai Dmitrievitch, the guests wish to offer you their congratulations.

Vener. Let them. What is it to me?

Best Man. But—but oughtn't you to let them have some champagne?

Vener. Bekletov, do see to it! Is there any champagne? Oh, yes. [Producing a solitary bottle, he sets it upon the table] Now—everyone drink as he pleases. Liubov, go and get your dress changed, as it is nearly time to start.

Liubov. But *where* can I get it changed, and especially as I have not got Duniasha to help me?

Vener. Of course you have not. Why should you have. But I will give you a hand myself, and so will my cook. So please do hurry.

Best Man. To the health of the young couple!

Vener. To the health of anyone you like so long as you don't take long over it.

Petrusha. And to feminine emancipation!

Vener. Oh, how I wish I was gone!

Petrusha. And to freedom, and to learning! [The guests retire] And a last one to the young couple before I myself depart. [Vener. dons hat and coat]

Liubov. [re-entering] Good-bye, all! Give my love to Papa. Good-bye, all! Good-bye!

Petrusha. Until we meet again! Hurrah for female liberty!

Nikolaev. [to himself] Yes, I knew all along that only the most shocking nonsense would be talked here! Just listen to that young clown alone! And actually he believes his stuff to be new!

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Scene 1

[A room in the Pribyshevs' mansion. Wedding guests seated in groups. Mar. Vas. in gala attire. Iv. Mikh. walking up and down with the District Posrednik, or Land Settlement Mediator.]

Mar. Vas. Why are they so late returning? [She looks at a clock] Quite time that they were back it is.

A Guest. Perhaps something has detained them?

Second Guest. Then let us drink their healths. [To a fellow guest] How are *you?*

Mediator. [to Iv. Mikh.] So you have decided upon redemption? Surely, though, the decision is not final?

Iv. Mikh. It is—quite. My idea is to let the peasants have my vacant land at Gretsovo, and excuse any supplementary payments. And I believe that they are not opposed to the scheme.

Mediator. I should think not indeed! In fact, if the offer should be refused, the fault will be mine, not theirs. The unfortunate point is that nowhere in this district have we a precedent to guide us, and that generosity such as yours——

A Guest [as he passes] What? Talking business *today!*

Mediator. [continuing] As a matter of fact, it ought not to be done, for no such conditions of agreement can possibly hold good for ever. [To the guest who has just spoken] Is not this a fine example of business methods? Here is our Ivan Mikhailovitch proposing to present his peasants with 1700 desiatini of land for nothing!

The Guest. Oh, surely not?

Iv. Mikh. Yes, but what else can I do? There must be a settlement of some sort some day.

Mediator. Ah, but this is not the time to do it. Remember what you said to me when we quarrelled over that old peasant dame and her petition.

Iv. Mikh. Yes, but in those days things were new to me, and I lost my temper.—Well, eleven o'clock, and the young couple not back yet!

Mediator. Besides, remember that though the barin of Pribyshev may win praise from his peasants, he will get nothing from his fellow landowners save disapproval.

Iv. Mikh. Never mind. My reward will come.

Mediator. So you believe the arrangement likely to benefit you?

Iv. Mikh. I say that, any benefit apart, one must move with the times.

Mar. Vas. And that is what he is always saying. Always he keeps saying that education is going to improve things, and then losing his temper because the peasants won't work. Isn't that so, Jean?

Iv. Mikh. Education *is* going to improve things. [To some of the lady guests] What have *you* been talking about meanwhile?

Mar. Vas. Oh, we have been discussing our own marryings. Jean, how afraid of you I used to be! Do you remember it, and how once you brought me a diamond necklace which I would not accept, and how we danced a mazurka at that ball, and how I could not make up my mind as to which man exactly I should have? Ah, it was all so young and foolish—and so delightful! [To the lady guests again] Never could my mother bear to have things done plainly, and we had all Moscow to our wedding, and the church door awninged over in red, and the aisles banked with flowers, and lined with——

A Lady Guest. Yes, in those days things were done very differently.

Mar. Vas. And this morning—what? Why, a mere tradesman's sort of wedding! Is *that* how one should give away an only daughter?

Mediator. Well, though the affair may not have been smart, at least it was comme il faut, for nowadays it is the fashion for the newly-married couple to go straight from altar to carriage. Nor, perhaps, is it so very bad a fashion.

Var. Vas. Well, at all events it has not long been the fashion.

Iv. Mikh. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the time has come when you must partake of my wine. And I can guarantee that none of you have ever tasted its equal.

Mar. Vas. By the way, some of you do tell me how the young couple ought properly to be met—by whom exactly, and where? I have quite forgotten the procedure.

A Lady Guest. As soon as they arrive the parents should post themselves ready to receive them with bread and salt. And then——

Second L. G. No, no! That is quite wrong. Rather, things ought to begin with the best man announcing the couple. Then the ushers should bring them in. Then the parents should——

Iv. Mikh. Oh dear! Oh dear! How many more items to the ritual?

Mediator. Ah, I love these old customs: so beautiful they are, and so truly Russian.

Mar. Vas. Jean, do not be long at table, for I want to have a private talk with Liubochka before the departure.

A Lady Guest. How one remembers afterwards the

gaiety and commotion of an occasion like this!

Iv. Mikh. Hark! Someone is coming now! It must be they at last! Up with you, Maria Vasilievna, and take the bread-and-salt before they arrive.

A Guest. And gold pieces to lay amongst the salt, so that one day the young couple may acquire riches.

Mar. Vas. Quite right! Have you the pieces, Jean?

Iv. Mikh. Yes. Oh no, though—I put them into the salt long ago. [Nurse and the maids of the household are seen thrusting inquisitive heads through a doorway. Some musicians post themselves in readiness. Iv. Mikh. continues to a footman] As they enter, be ready with the champagne, and then to hand round the hors-d'oeuvres. Yes, here they come. [He takes the breach trencher from Mar. Vas., draws himself to his full height, and advances to the centre of the room]

A Guest. This is indeed a solemn moment!

Second Guest. Indeed it is—especially for the father and mother.

Iv. Mikh. [bursting into tears, and turning to kiss Mar. Vas.] Dearest one, you have all my love! To think that ever we should have lived to see such happiness!

Mar. Vas. Ah Jean! It has made me turn quite dizzy—but also joyful, of course. I hardly know what I am doing. Do tell me when the

right moment comes, to prevent me from growing confused. [A sound of footsteps is heard without] Am I standing in the right place?

Scene 2

[Enter Nikolaev—alone]

Iv. Mikh. [signing to the musicians, and exclaiming, "Hush, you blockheads!"] Why have you not the bride and bridegroom with you?

Nikolaev. [disjointedly] Scurrilous doings equal to today's have never before come within my experience! [He hurls his hat upon the floor] Did I not warn you, you old simpleton, that something of the sort was going to happen? Well, neither you nor anyone else shall fool me without paying for it. I am no longer your kinsman; I am no longer your friend; I am no longer a man who desires even your bare acquaintance. [To his wife, who is amongst the guests] Sophie Alexeievna, it is time that we went home.

Iv. Mikh. What does he say? Wh-wh-what—what has happened?

Mar. Vas. And what about the young people, Jean? Oh, I am all bewildered!

Nikolaev. The young people? You can kiss them yet—provided that you can overtake them!

Iv. Mikh. What do you mean? I beg that you will

not keep me in suspense. How is it that you have returned without—without——

Nikolaev. Returned without the couple? For the reason that they have gone—just spat in our faces, and gone. [He flings himself into a chair, and the guests come crowding about him]

Nurse. Gone without so much as the final blessing!

A Guest. Impossible, impossible!

Second Guest. An unheard-of thing! [Mar. Vas. sinks back upon a chair with a gasp, and Nurse rushes forward to her assistance]

Iv. Mikh. [still with the bread trencher in his hands] Nikolaev, this jest of yours is more than I can bear. Where is Liubov? Teil me! [To a footman] Tell me where the young couple are!

Footman. Gone, sir, if you please.

Iv. Mikh. Is everyone mad? Did you with your own eyes see them go?

Footman. Yes, sir. I helped Fedor to put them into the wagon.

Iv. Mikh. To put them into *what?* Into "the wagon"? Then you shall be flogged to death! [He hurls the bread trencher at the footman's head, and rushes upon the man, who takes to his heels]

Mar. Vas. Jean, Jean! What are you doing? Oh, do not, for goodness' sake! [Iv. Mikh. halts, and stands irresolute]

Nikolaev. Yes, brother, here we have the new fash-

ion, quite the new fashion. And though I pity you and despise you about equally, and you can commit such follies yourself if you want to, you mustn't ask others to join in them. Only because I pity you do I not, at this very moment, say that I desire your acquaintance no more, and intend never again to speak to you.

A Guest. But tell us exactly what has happened, and how they came to depart without even the final blessing?

Mediator. And in a wagon, too—an inconceivable thing?

Nikolaev. Well, listen. Always I suspected that some underhand trick was in preparation, and was expecting it; and when I reached the church my expectations became certainties, for there was our bridegroom come to be married in a peajacket and blue trousers! And though, of course, so long as the religious ceremony lasted, I did my best to ignore the spectacle, I could not do so any longer when I saw the scandal extended alike to the manner and to the vehicle of his departure. Now, kindly remember that it was never of my own choice that I attended the wedding. I attended it simply because you pressed me, and because you hinted at a hurt to Liubov's feelings if I did not. And now that, as I anticipated, the fellow has shown himself destitute of decent feeling, I will go home. Most of all am I sorry for Liubov.

Iv. Mikh. I repeat that you must be joking. Where are the married couple? For God's sake show me some consideration—remember that I am her father.

Nikolaev. Brother, is it likely that I should be jesting on such a subject? I only wish that such a thing were possible! If you want to know exactly where the couple are, they must, by this time, be about at the Lashnev posting-house.

Iv. Mikh. Then——

Nikolaev. No, no, Ivan! Take an old friend's advice, and do not follow them. Rather, listen to the rest of my tale. As I have said, I always knew that a contretemps would occur, but I comforted myself with the reflection that "you needn't let yourself be put off by a wretched scribbler." And—and I attended the ceremony, and, when the ceremony was over, accompanied some of my fellows to the bridegroom's chambers, where the only guests besides ourselves were the best man (and the flat looked little better than a pigsty, with its litter of mess and rubbish) and a kinsman of some sort—a Civil Service official, or something after that nature. Yet what do you suppose Nikolai Dmitrievitch himself did? Why, he kept his back turned upon us up to the very moment when he had to put on his hat and coat to carry off his wife!

Iv. Mikh. Which he did in what?

Mar. Vas. [interposing] And of course without a

maid, seeing that Duniasha had remained here?

Iv. Mikh. In what, I ask? Do not play with me! Do not keep me waiting!

Nikolaev. In what? Why, in a tilt-wagon! I saw the thing with my own eyes.

Iv. Mikh. Look here. I——

Nikolaev. Why should I look? It was for you, rather, to have looked—to have seen whom you were giving your daughter to!

Mar. Vas. And so Petrusha was there? How came *that* about?

A Guest. Nikolai Dmitrievitch must have taken offence at something.

Second Guest. Not necessarily. I heard, long before the marriage, that he was contemplating something of the sort.

Third Guest. Then he must be stark, staring mad.

Second Guest. What surprises me most is how *she* could ever have consented to such a proceeding.

Third Guest. Oh, she is entirely under his thumb.

First Guest. At least it will teach Ivan Mikhailovitch a lesson.

Second Guest. The lesson always experienced, in the end, by pride.

Iv. Mikh. Do you say that Petrusha was there? Sashka! [Enter the footman of that name]

Mar. Vas. For heaven's sake, be calm, Jean!

Iv. Mikh. You must not interfere. [To the footman] Where is Peter Ivanovitch?

Footman. I do not know, sir.

Iv. Mikh. Then you shall be *made* to know! Go at once and find him. [With sudden fury] Shall my own flesh and blood mock me? [Exit the footman]

Second Footman. [entering with three notes on a salver] If you please, sir, Peter Ivanovitch has gone away with Katerina Matveievna and Alexei Pavlovitch. But before they started they bade me hand you these. [He offers the notes to Iv. Mikh.]

Iv. Mikh. [taking them] What did you say? *When* did these people start, and for what destination?

Footman. I do not know, sir, though they are said to have started for St. Petersburg.

First Guest. How extraordinary!

Second Guest. Yes, is it not? But there! Misfortunes never come singly.

Nikolaev. The new ideas again! The boy especially is absolutely silly with them.

Iv. Mikh. [opening one of the notes] My friends, I am in sore trouble. Pray bear with me, for I am ready to acknowledge that I have been foolish, and will not attempt to deny it. [To the best man] This handwriting escapes my eyesight. Pray read it aloud for me. [To the footman] And do you go and order the travelling-coach and the four greys to be harnessed up, and tell the coachman that if he is not ready within five minutes I will break every

tooth in his head. Yes, I say that in the hearing of all, and may God and the great Tsar judge me if I keep not my word! The day of my serfs is over. [To the best man] Now—continue.

Best man. [reading aloud] "Gospodin Pribyshev"——

Iv. Mikh. One moment. From whom is the note?

Best Man. From Katerina Matveievna.

Iv. Mikh. Good! This very day I will have a settling up with that crazy wench! Continue.

Best Man. "Gospodin Pribyshev, certain social tendencies which I need not specify have of late attained an augmented degree of prominence in your personality: and though that degree does not, as yet at all events, extend to maturity, it extends to the point of affording persons who hold the views which I do grounds for hoping that even yet you may be brought to bestir yourself in the stagnant swamp which your dully self-satisfied, and ultra-conservative, and super-reactionary circle of activities represents, and to turn your eyes in the direction of the doctrines of the dawning age. Yet, to speak plainly, I know that any intellectual advance which you may achieve will never really become translated into action, for there lies between you and ourselves a yawning and immeasurable gulf. Of the existence of that gulf I and mine stand ever charged with a subjective consciousness, whilst

also we note that though, as I have said, there are social tendencies in you which recent events in your social ring have brought increasingly into evidence, those events have forced to the surface also all the sediment of ignorance, reaction, and retrogression with which the bottom of that ring is lined. And though, for some time past, we and yourself have lain forcibly juxtaposed in that sediment, we have never become fused together, or ceased to be mutually distinct entities. Hence I have decided now to return to St. Petersburg, but this time under the banner of a new doctrine with regard to sex which approximates closely to my spiritual convictions. A propos, the above-mentioned fact that of late your consciousness has shown some signs of turning to gaze towards the road of honour warrants me in supposing that possibly you will one day come to take an interest also in the sex movement of which I speak. It is a movement which has been initiated solely for the public good, and already stands organised on thoroughly realistic lines, lines enabling a group of choice spirits and progressive personalities to engage in unfettered, communistic sex-association. And to this institute, an institute known to its originators, for the reasons stated, as 'The Commune,' I now propose to add myself."

Nikolaev. Brother, for a long time past that com-

mune has been notorious. People call it the——
[The rest he whispers in Iv. Mikh.'s ear]

Iv. Mikh. [to the best man] Continue. Is there much more of it?

Best Man. A good deal: but the end is in sight. [Again reading] "Thus, as soon as I become resident in the Commune referred to, and once more privileged to move in congenial society, I shall re-engage in journalistic work, and, so, further both the concrete and the abstract ideas of the dawning age with a vigour proportioned to the conditions of my new life of freedom and independence. And with that, Pribyshev, I will bid you farewell. To reproach you is not my desire, for I know only too well how inevitably the slimy mire of your social resting-place must eventually become reflected upon your personality (to the personality of Maria Vasilievna I will forbear, in this connection, to allude), and that it is not your fault alone that you are what you are. But bear in mind always one thing: that in this world there are, in addition to you and your like, certain enlightened personalities who will not calmly accept the blows dealt them by the established order, and that, unless you desire to forfeit your title to be regarded as human, you must take to treating those personalities with consideration and respect. To which I will add with still further frankness (though, since mere recrimination lies beneath

my dignity, I will not also cast in your teeth certain other social tendencies which you display) the remark that I respect you not at all."

Iv. Mikh. Is that the lot?

Best Man. No. There is a postscript. "Please sell my lands on my behalf (they ought to fetch not less than 50 roubles per desiatina, and I know that I can rely upon your honour in *this* matter at least), and dispatch me the proceeds less 2,300 roubles at your immediate convenience, and 150 by the very next post."

Iv. Mikh. Well, well! Already she has 200 overdrawn, and her total annual income is 150. Oh, my fine lady! This very day you and I will have a talk together!—Now for the next note. It is from Alexei Pavlovitch, I suppose? Quite so. Read it.

Best Man. [reading] "Ivan Mikhailovitch, not long ago I borrowed of you the sum of 32 roubles; and though that sum's repayment is not at the moment within my capacity, I know that, unless you have lost all decent feeling, you will not hold me responsible for the circumstance that the money can reach you only when I may find it convenient to dispatch it. As a matter of fact, the rich always despise the poor, and that is peculiarly the case in your own household. For the rest, I am travelling to St. Petersburg with Katerina Matveievna. Think what you like of

her personality. For my own part, I deem it a lofty one. My respects to you."

Iv. Mikh. Short and clear! Is the carriage ready? I may break the wind of every horse I possess, yet I'll overtake the fellow—yet get *that* much satisfaction!

Mar. Vas. Oh, but forgive him, forgive him! Remember how poor and friendless he is.

First Guest. As though he deserved forgiveness!

Iv. Mikh. [to the best man] And now for the third note. Let us finish the series.

Best Man. [again reading aloud] "My father, I have been thinking over the new philosophy, and it has taught me that the reason why our people live such miserable lives is that the family hinders individual development. And as I myself have now managed to acquire a good deal of development, whereas you are only an ultra-conservative reactionary, and Mamma a fool—yes, I've heard you say that yourself many times, and everyone knows it to be true—why should I not have more room for scope, why should I have eternally to lie stagnating in a slough? Why, even at my school the teachers are all undeveloped and unbearable, and want me to go in for a 'career'! The time, though, for Oblomovism [1] is past, and new principles are

[1] A term derived from the hero of Goncharov's famous novel, immortalised as the type of listless inactivity.

dawning for men of progress, and, for my part, I have decided to go away to St. Petersburg, where, if the professors should turn out to be decent, I will attend their lectures, and if they should turn out to be otherwise, then I will study by myself. Also, if you are not a regular Kirsanov,[2] and as obstinately stupid as he, you will send me means to do this with. And I have quite made up my mind about it, and the more so because I find that Venerovsky is a regular retrograde, and has ceased to believe in feminine emancipation. Farewell. If ever we should meet again, I hope it will be as man with man, under the normal conditions of the coming age. For a long time past all this has been boiling in my breast, and now I have said it. Peter Pribyshev."

Mar. Vas. Oh dear! Oh dear! What *does* it all mean?

Nikolaev. Brother Ivan, I am indeed sorry for you —sorry from my heart: Yet do not touch this boy, for, after all, he is not to blame. What is to blame is the order which, though labelled "new," is as old as time, seeing that, from the beginning of the world, conceit, conceit, and again conceit has led the young to instruct their elders.

Chorus of Guests. True, true!

First Guest. Yet what a state of things!

[2] One of the parents depicted in Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons."

Second Guest. And as ridiculous as stupid!

Iv. Mikh. Maria Vasilievna, you have been a fool, but I have been more so—more so by a thousand times.—Is the carriage ready?

Footman. Yes, sir—just driving up to the door.

Iv. Mikh. Then tell Duniasha that I am going to take her with me.

Mediator. But what about your and my little business?

Iv. Mikh. What about——? Oh, this: that from the present moment onwards even a knife held to my throat shall not make me surrender a single foot of land, or give away a single kopek, or remit a single tithe. Let people be astonished if they like. Today I have learnt my lesson.

Footman. The carriage is ready, sir.

Iv. Mikh. Then where is my overcoat, cur? What are you thinking about? About how things have hitherto been? Maria Vasilievna, you said rightly that students and schools and the Manifesto and the rest of it were making things worse rather than better. Let them one and all go to Hell and damnation!—Good-bye, my friends. I hope to overtake the runaways, and squeeze the breath out of one or two of them. To Petrusha, however, I shall award only a good birching.

Mar. Vas. Oh, be merciful, Jean! Yes, be merciful for my sake, and especially to Alexei Pav-

lovitch, that poor, miserable youth who has done what he has done only because he is so young.

Nikolaev. Nevertheless, a bringing back of the son won't bring back the daughter.

Iv. Mikh. [stepping to the table, and gulping down a glassful of wine] Say no more. If I give Petrusha a good birching, you may scold and blame and despise me for doing so, but *he* will bless me. And the soundest of birchings it shall be! Until we meet again, therefore.

CURTAIN

ACT V

Scene 1

[The coffee-room of a posting-house. Enter the manager and factotum of the establishment.]

Manager. Well, away they go. Yet the Makary lot is not back yet! Whose turn is it next?

Factotum. Akimkin's; and *he* isn't back. He must have been kept at Lashnev. But, thank the Lord, there's no courrier tonight.

Manager. No, though there was a stage at seven o'clock. Well, what now? Another traveller now would be awkward.

Factotum. I tell you what we used to do when Tikhon Moseitch was manager. When no horses were in, he used to go and make himself snug in the hayloft. Aye, and I the same—for I was working here the same as now. But one night two roughish customers arrived from Kapkaz—and they meant to be attended to. All over the place they ran. Every corner was searched until they found us. And then you should have seen Tikhon Moseitch being dragged out by the legs! "Don't you touch me," he said. "I'm a Government official." But, Lord bless you, *they* didn't care. They dragged him about the yard all the more. Oh, it was fun, I can tell you!

Manager. I'd like to see anyone treat *me* like that! *I'd* soon give him something for himself!

Factotum. Well, travellers are quieter nowadays, though I don't know why. Some of them even call us peasants "you."

Manager. That is education, "progress." And what of it, fool?

Factotum. Oh, only that I and the other lads have noticed that if a traveller "you's" us we needn't expect any vodka from him, whereas if he kicks up a racket we can look at any rate for three grivni, and maybe for four.

Manager [grinning] Yes, I've noticed the same thing. Well, soon all of us will be mincing our speech like that. But see that

pig's mess there! Just sweep the place up a bit, or at least clear the table, for at present it would sicken a traveller even to look at it. However, travellers will always grumble. Give one half an excuse, and he'll grumble. [The factotum does a little tidying up] There. That'll do, and now we'll go and make ourselves snug, for there's sure to be no one else come along tonight. [The yard bell rings] Well, those people shan't get a step further than this, even if they offer to pay double for it.

Scene 2

[Enter Vener., and Liubov—the latter pale and subdued]

Vener. [to the manager] I want fresh horses. Foreman, see that they are put in. [To Liubov] We are alone at last! Is it not a relief? Yes, all that odious nonsense is over, and I feel a man again. Say that you are glad, dearest?

Liubov. Yes, I am glad—and also tired.

Manager. Not a single horse is available.

Vener. But I have ordered some. Here is the money, and kindly see that they appear.

Manager. When they have been fed and rested.

Vener. No, now. Otherwise I will write something in the complaint book.

Manager. Here's the book, and you can complain

as much as you like. There's plenty of others do the same.

Vener. It looks as though conscientiousness were not yet an attribute of the people at large, and as though these people in particular were boors. [He seats himself at the table, opens the complaint book, and makes as though to write]

Manager [hotly] Why don't you use your eyes before you write? Look, now, "Mail, 5.23, 8 horses"—and it's nine o'clock, and they haven't come back yet. "Colonel and wife, 6.17, 6 horses"—and our stud, all put together, only amounts to 16. So you'd better have looked at the book a bit before you called better men than yourself "boors."

Vener. I'm not going to bandy words with you. Leave the room.

Manager. [as he withdraws] Yet just you be careful in future. I don't take abuse from anyone, from any sort of scum—no, not even from a colonel in a coach-and-six.

Scene 3

Vener. Foreman, bring a samovar. [To Liubov] For you will have tea, will you not, dearest? [To the factotum] Yes, and sugar as well.

Factotum. We charge twenty kopeks for a samovar, and you pay the manager for the tea and sugar separate.

Vener. Then bring the lot. [To Liubov] You did say that you will have some tea, did you not?

Liubov. I did. But no—after all, I think I won't.

Vener. Nevertheless, pray take off your cloak.

Liubov. I do not see the necessity.

Vener. [drawing his chair a little nearer to hers] You will now have realised how sharply we stand divided from your late companions. View life quite simply, and from now onwards set yourself to understand why your father's opinions inevitably lead him to oppress and abuse his fellow creatures, and to believe that that is the natural order of things, and share your mother's idea that the imbecilities from which we have just escaped are so much indispensable nuptial procedure. Can you and I reform such people? No, of course we cannot. All that we, as thinking personalities, can do is to say, "You ladies and gentlemen may remain ignorant and worthless if you choose; that is your own affair: but at least you must let *us* develop into honourable human beings." When this view shall have become yours, dearest——

Liubov. Oh, *do* not call me "dearest"! I cannot bear it!

Vener. I won't, then. But, as I was saying, when this view shall have become yours you will recognise also that every collision between ourselves and these worthless people leaves the latter humiliated, and ourselves triumphant. And

they recognise this of their own accord—recognise it, that is to say, so far as they are capable of that or any other mental process. Probably at this very moment, for example, your parents are acknowledging what fools they have been.

Liubov. In what way have my parents hurt you? Even if they *are* undeveloped, well, what of it? There are worse things than that.

Vener. Yes, dearest, there are. What I mean is that the very fact that your parents' views differ from our own places them and ourselves on two different plots of ground—the one plot constituting, for ourselves, our right, and the other plot our left. Never at any time can people who are dull and supine and cultureless and reactionary and dishonourable be accorded respect: and since your parents answer to that description, it follows that it is your duty to come to have as little veneration for them as I myself have. So at least on that we now stand agreed, do we not? Anyone but myself might have temporised, and made concessions: but that is not my way—I believe truth and honour to be the better one.

Liubov. I fail altogether to understand you. For my father, at all events, does not stand wholly opposed to the new ideas.

Vener. Ah, but do you not see the cause of that—that he is afraid of myself, and therefore playing the hypocrite? As for your mother, who

could respect a woman who has not an idea beyond eating and sleeping?

Liubov. Let me say this: that I love my parents dearly.

Vener. Then that is wrong. You ought to love only what is rational and honourable and free, and personalities which have combined in them those three qualities. In no other way can you yourself become human. In any case it is an absurdity to love a woman merely because she brought one into the world. Even myself you ought to love less because I am handsome and clever than because I combine in myself the three qualities which I have named, and do so to a pre-eminent degree. [Enter the factotum with the samovar] Well, will you pour out?

Liubov. No. Everything is horrid and dirty. Look at the cups! Oh, I cannot.

Vener. [resuming] Remember too, dear wife, that the only way fully to attain a knowledge of what I have just outlined lies through trial, through strife, and through profound study, since the only characters able from the first to imbibe that knowledge with a clarity equal to my own are characters as fine and strong as I myself am. However, you ought to prove the more fortunate in this respect in that association with myself should enable you to assimilate the truth with greater ease than might otherwise have been the case. Only listen, only ask questions,

and suddenly you will find yourself ready-seated upon the pinnacle to which it is the duty of every human being to aspire. Cast away all verbal equivocation. We are alone, and together, and free. Tell me whether—But you are not drinking any tea?

Liubov. [with a frown] How could I possibly do so? Look at the filth of the cups! Anyone and everyone seems to have been using them already—including, as likely as not, people with diseases. I simply cannot touch them.

Vener. It is merely that you are out of spirits. Perhaps you would rather that we did not travel any further tonight?

Liubov. I do not care. I am tired. Why did you prevent Duniasha from coming with us?

Vener. That is a question which, in your place, I should not have felt justified in asking. You are free, and I am free: and that is what shall always be the footing subsisting between us. Another than I might have considered himself to have acquired rights over your person; but I do not, for I shall always recognise that liberty of person is your due, and merely leave it to you so to order your life that at last you will of yourself say, "I have left my prison-house, and found daylight."

Liubov. Why did you prevent Duniasha from coming with us?

Vener. I did so because her attendance upon you

would have smacked of "seigniorishness," and been degrading to us. Also, and chiefly, she would have been in the way. [He moves his chair a little nearer] May I kiss you?

Liubov. No, you may not. Please leave me alone. How horrible the cups are!

Vener. [smiling] Oh, never mind them. [He pours himself out a cupful, and drinks it] Do you say that I may not kiss you? Surely I may? Not but that, as ever, it is for you to give or to withhold your discretion. Perhaps a short sleep would do you good? If so, I will leave the room meanwhile, for I intend never to restrict your freedom.

Liubov. No—Yes—No, I want nothing. I am—I am supremely *bored.*

Vener. Do you think that I had not foreseen this? Remember that I and mine, the people of advanced views, exist for other purposes than a spinning of phrases. We are also people of action, people who cannot be turned aside from our goal. Hence I foresaw, long ago, that some such weariness would come upon you. *How* did I foresee that? Are you surprised at the extent of my prescience? Well, it is not so astonishing, after all. It is like this. Remember that you were brought up amongst the most sordid of surroundings, and that, for all your fineness of nature, you inevitably absorbed from those surroundings' stagnant, lethargic atmos-

phere a great deal of contamination. Well, though that contamination escaped your notice at the time (even as the dweller in a cowhouse might fail to remark the smell of the manure) there came a moment when, brought suddenly into contact with purity and strength, you realised the existence of your uncleanly environment, and saw flash across your vision a blinding beam of light. That beam of light was myself. Keep your vision fixed upon me immovably. Only thus will you realise your spiritual blemishes. [He paces the room excitedly]

Liubov. [under her breath] Yourself, yourself! Always yourself!

Vener. What did you say?

Liubov. Nothing. Pray continue.

Vener. Yet that mental revelation need not appal you—it is only a passing experience, for invariably do personalities which emerge from spiritual darkness for the first time begin by supposing the whole world to be hostile to them, and wishful to wound: that impression is latent in all abrupt changes of spiritual attitude. Do not, therefore, let that temporary diffidence, that temporary weakness, give you cause for fear, but pluck up the feeling by the roots, and cast it from you. Why, for example, are you now finding life tedious, and have spent the afternoon in declaring the vehicle to be uncomfortable, and yourself lost without Duniasha?

Why, similarly, have you just condemned these cups as unclean? All because you are still beset with something of your old seigniorial apathy, whereas you ought to be thinking only that at length there lies before you a life of freedom, and that beside you there stands a man who, for your sake, has made every concession to inferiority that——

Liubov. Never for a moment do you stop praising yourself!

Vener. Pardon me, but I praise in myself nothing except what deserves to be praised, and censure in myself nothing except what deserves to be censured—thus visiting alike my good points and my bad. And that is how I propose also to treat yourself. As for the quality known to the herd as "modesty," I believe it to be, despite the cult of it by stupidity and ignorance, a mere superstition—as when, for example, your mother affects to call herself a fool (though goodness knows that that is a pretty accurate description of her!).

Liubov. Do leave me alone! I am tired of you.

Vener. Indeed? Then for the present I will say no more, and instead, do some reading. Meanwhile you had better dissipate your present phase with one or another of the physical remedies which are open to you. Never am I going to lose my temper with you, but to seek—yes, and to find—the cause of your every act of temper,

and to remove that cause. For the moment, deferring what more must be said, I advise you to take a composing draught. [Throwing himself at full length upon a sofa, he produces from his travelling-bag a book, and falls to reading. Liubov rises, and is just moving towards the doorway, when a voice enquires behind the scenes, "Is there anyone in that room? Can I enter it?" and another voice answers, "Certainly, sir," and, as Liubov reaches the threshold, other voices become heard, and a ring at the yard bell, and Tverd. telling someone that "not a horse is said to be available"]

Scene 4

[Enter Tverd., Kat. Mat., and Petrusha—the latter half-tipsy from his indulgence at the wedding. Behind them is the factotum]

Kat. Mat. [to the factotum] Oh, but allow me, allow me! You declare no post-horses to be available. Then why is this place known at all as a posting-house? Is it, or is it not, a place where they keep post-horses? [Petrusha hiccups loudly]

Factotum. How many times shall I have to tell you that the only two horses that aren't out are the two that are in? The rest have to come back

yet. [At this point, for the first time, Vener. catches sight of the newcomers. He contrives to depart unnoticed]

Kat. Mat. But allow me, allow me! You are evading the question. In virtue of what do you refuse horses to people who have an equal right to them with any colonel alive?

Petrusha. Yes indeed! And you must understand that we are on our way to (hic!) St. Petersburg, and are not people (hic!) from a distance, but people who live at Pribyshevo. Give us (hic!) some horses, or it will be very (hic!) mean of you.

Factotum. Let me go and fetch the manager. [He attempts to depart, but is stopped by Tverd.]

Tverd. A fine ambassador indeed! Now, unless I am misunderstanding you, you are attempting to drive with us an independent commercial bargain, and we cannot allow that to be done.

Factotum. By the Lord, but you'll have to allow it! [Enter the manager]

Kat. Mat. [to the manager] Allow me yet again to demand of you fresh horses. We have just as much right to those horses as have all the military personages going. The age when colonels alone were respected, and the intellectual, or studious, class was despised, is past and gone.

Manager. Not for three hours past have we had a horse available. Look at the register for your-

self. Besides, in any case all travellers are treated alike here, and so are all ages.

Petrusha. [to Kat. Mat.] Let *me* talk to him. I know just how to do it. [To the manager] Kindly (hic!) set to and calculate when we shall reach St. Petersburg if (hic!) every posting-house goes and (hic! hic!)—You see, we *need* the horses. We need them (hic!) very much indeed. Cannot even you see that? So set to (hic!)—set to and make a calculation of what (hic!) those horses will cost.

Tverd. [to the factotum] And meanwhile tell the automaton, our driver, that I want my trunk brought in here, and yourself that all of us want some food. Yes, and, as about the horses and that calculation, here is the price of a drink.

Kat. Mat. [to the manager] I intend to report you.

Manager. And you haven't even looked at the register!

Petrusha. [to Kat. Mat.] Do not interfere. I will do any reporting necessary. [To the manager] Remember that we are on our way to join the Commune (hic!), and therefore that if you don't——

Manager. Go and join anything you like. What is it to me?

Tverd. [looking at the complaint book] Herein I find everything set down as though by a visiting commissioner himself. For example, one

Stepanov here "experienced delay," though "travelling on business"!

Kat. Mat. That is *my* complaint.

Manager. Complain, then, sudarina. When horses aren't available they're just not available.

Kat. Mat. What an exhibition of non-comprehension of duty, and what a demonstration of lack of human feeling!

Tverd. I propose to set forth in this book not only our spiritual plight, but also this posting-house manager's homicidal tendencies, and——

Petrusha. Give *me* the book (hic!) *I* will do it all, for (hic!) an idea has just occurred to me.

Manager. [depriving Petrusha of the book] Come, come, you gentlemen! You are only using the book for sport, though I'm every bit as good as you are, and anything that you wrote down would only be your own opinions.

Tverd. Katerina Matveievna, you see from this that even a pilgrimage towards the light can be thwarted by a contemptible obstacle. Yet so it is. For the rest, this estimable fellow citizen of ours appears to have lost his temper, and we will let him alone. [Petrusha hiccups with such increased vigour that Tverd. bursts out laughing] Hullo, young hopeful! Didn't I tell you not to partake too freely of the healing waters of Hungary?

Petrusha. Don't laugh at me like that (hic!)! In

fact, you had better not, I can tell you, for I'm not the sort to allow it.

Tverd. How like a boy to be offended at a trifle!

Petrusha. Boy (hic!) yourself! I am a free individual, and (hic!) intend to join that Commune.

Tverd. Youthful Pribyshev, a better decision would be to take a nap.

Petrusha. I repeat that *you* are the "boy," not me. Besides, I find you lacking in respect for (hic!) the freedom of the human personality. There! Take *that* to yourself! Yes, I know it was stupid of me to go and drink so much, and make myself uncomfortable, but if I hadn't done it I should (hic!) have said a thing or two to you that might have surprised you. Well, after all, I *will* have a nap. [Collapsing into a chair, he goes to sleep muttering, "The chief obstacle to (hic!) individual development is the fam——"

Scene 5

Tverd. Well, shall we sit down now, and do some tea-drinking? But confound it all! Someone has been doing that already. Hi, you rustic, you man-of-all-work, you seignior, or whatever your title is—can't we have a fresh example of the implement which is known usually as a samovar?

Kat. Mat. [lighting a cigarette, and brushing back

her hair] What I especially like about you, Tverdinsky, is your playful attitude towards life. For no matter how untoward the accidents that may fall to your lot, your mysterious spiritual depths continue to conceal within them the impression which these accidents have created, and outwardly to jest. True, some people might be led by that to deem your personality a frivolous one, but that is not the case with myself—I consider the attitude commendable, and respect it. So now we have taken the first step towards the attainment of a new existence!

Tverd. We have. Yet why that amount of rhetoric, seeing that you know me to be at once emancipated and intellectual, and that both of us know our action to be right. Never do I like "preparations." Only when the event arises is it my custom to show myself for what I am—a worker and a fighter. At all other times I deem the facile jest permissible.

Kat. Mat. A point which I have been debating ever since we started is why the Commune was founded by a man, and not by a woman.

Tverd. Pure accident. [The factotum enters with the samovar] Which of us is to pour out?

Kat. Mat. Allow me. I would suggest that, as our respective titles to do so are equal, we cast lots.

Tverd. Quite so. The decision shall be left to the blind hands of chance. [Taking a cigarette, he clenches his two hands, and puts them behind

his back. Kat. Mat. does the same with a teaspoon]

Kat. Mat. Now, then. Do you guess.

Tverd. [taking Kat. Mat.'s hands from behind her, inspecting them, and turning one of them over] *This* hand seems particularly protuberant, though not unsightly.

Kat. Mat. [smiling] Don't be silly, Tverdinsky! Well, your guess is correct, so I will do the pouring out.

Tverd. How our expedition is binding us together! How great is the effect of female propinquity! [He edges a little nearer to her] Thank heaven, you are not wearing a crinoline! [He points to the back of her neck] What a nice little bow—quite an old-fashioned bow!

Kat. Mat. Tverdinsky, you know that though Hugo was effete, he was also a poet of insight and intelligence. Doubtless you remember the passage, "N'insultez pas——"

Tverd. Ah, that little bow is first-rate. I desire to smooth it out, and make it more tidy—not merely look at it.[1] [He reaches forward]

Kat. Mat. [slapping his hand] Tverdinsky, I must first come to know you better. Meanwhile let me outline to you the destiny of woman. In the present undeveloped state of society the destiny of woman is a strange anomaly. [He

[1] The Russian original plays, here, upon the verbs pogladit and prigladit.

edges away] Tverdinsky, my respect for you alone prevents me from beginning to doubt the sincerity of your convictions. For please be so good as to tell me what your hand is doing.

Tverd. The strange situations that arise in life! Here have I for three months been living under the same roof as yourself, and communicating to you my brain's every product. Yet only to-day have I been brought to view you in a different light. [He lays a hand upon the back of her chair] Why do you object to my laying my hand there? I never do a thing without purpose.

Kat. Mat. [beaming] Tverdinsky, search your consciousness—search it to its very depths. And when you have done that I will accord the resultant avowal an honourable hearing. I wish for no abstractions: above things of that kind we now stand superior. Yet meanwhile do not touch me.

Tverd. I am not touching you! No, nor am I touching anything else. Well—for the avowal. In your mien I can discern something consuming, something wholly transcending the feminine. Do you know, a friend of mine once lived with a woman for awhile (she was a governess, and we used to call her 'babochka" [1]) who greatly resembled you.—What an adorable little bow that is! [Suddenly he embraces her]

[1] Butterfly.

Kat. Mat. [freeing herself, and rising] Allow me, allow me! First think it all over. Think it over carefully and thoroughly. Delve to the bottom of your heart. Then put the result into words.

Tverd. [walking after her] I will—I will say that you are the sorceress of my heart, that you are a narghile of the most celestial potentiality, that you are an exhalation from the feet of my idols, that you are the embodiment of the created firmament's whole sweetness and light, and that you are a being with whom I wish to come to a working agreement.

Kat. Mat. Oh, you are only talking nonsense—and that is a greater insult to an honourable human being even than it is to a woman. Yes, I fail to understand you. You declare yourself to be attracted towards me, and I, on my side, consider you not wholly unattractive. Examine yourself, therefore, and endeavour to view things solely from the objective standpoint, seeing that the subjective all too often misleads. Well?

Tverd. [edging towards her again, and grasping her hand] Divine and most emancipated of all women, truly is fortune favouring us! For see how yon babe of Minerva [he points towards the slumbering Petrusha] is lying clasped in Morpheus' embrace! Alone we are—yes, and love is consuming me! [He endeavours to kiss

her] Our future lies with fate, but our present with—— [He embraces her] My beloved one!

Kat. Mat. [breaking away] Oh, but you are insulting me! How mistaken I have been in your intentions! Unless you release me I shall call out.

Petrusha. [in his sleep] The chief obstacle to (hic!) the development of individuality is the family.

Tverd. [to Kat. Mat., attempting to detain her] Conduct of that sort is unworthy of an emancipated woman. Why misunderstand me so—why read only grossness into my words?

Kat. Mat. To what have I not come? Oh, to think of it, to think of it!—But I stand above such matters. No—below them, below all the world! [She seats herself at some distance from Tverdinsky, and buries her face in her hands]

Scene 6

[Enter Vener. and Liubov—the latter weeping]

Liubov. What is the good of "freedom of women" if it does not keep you from annoying me? I simply hate it! How right Mamma was when she said that—— [Suddenly catching sight of the newcomers] Katenka? Alexei Pavlovitch?

Petrusha? My darling Petia, what *has* happened?

Tverd. [to himself] Not such a bad-looking "surpriser," this! [To Liubov] What has happened is that we are on our way to St. Petersburg.

Kat. Mat. Liubov, what you said when you entered the room voiced an essential truth. But for the moment let me go on thinking things over. There is much that I must think over. [Squaring her elbows upon the table again, she relapses into thought]

Petrusha. [waking, and rising] Wait a minute. *I'll* tell you all about it. Of course you know that the family—yes, development, and all that. Well, I had meant to leave home by myself, but then I overheard Alexei Pavlovitch saying that he knew of a Commune, and that it was a truly wonderful convict—I mean, institution, and he must join it. So I'm all right now, except that I feel a bit sleepy through being woken up so suddenly. [He sinks back into his chair]

Liubov. [to Vener.] What is wrong with him?

Vener. Only what is wrong with all small boys who drink too much, and then suffer from affected devilry.

Petrusha. [suddenly sitting up] Affected devil yourself! Besides, everyone knows you to be a retrograde as well—Alexei Pavlovitch himself told me, as we were coming along this afternoon,

that you had married for money only—which people of *my* ideas think a very wrong thing to do. [He falls asleep again]

Tverd. A small boy! A *very* small boy! [To Vener.] Believe me, I never said any such thing, or thought it either. Merely your convictions are sufficient to ref——

Vener. That's right. Eat your own words. Just like you! [To Kat. Mat.] Now, madam, you and I have a little matter to thresh out. When I was explaining things to you in my chambers I asked you not to divulge anything of what I had told you, and you were good enough to promise that you would not. Since then, however, you seem to have found it inconvenient to keep your word, and accordingly I must insist upon your doing so. Do not forget that I and mine are not only people of intellect, but people of action, people altogether different from the babblers who form the majority of your acquaintance—different because, instead of allowing ourselves to be managed, we ourselves manage, even as I manage you. And in any case something seems to have led you, who have always boasted of your freedom from prejudice, at least to shrink from letting the world know of your latest exploit of all.

Kat. Mat. Allow me, allow me!

Vener. Yes, I will "allow" you.

Kat. Mat. No—it is not worth while. Possibly you

are right. Let me finish my process of thinking things out, and then I will address you again. [She relapses into her former attitude]

Vener. [to Liubov] So much for *that* lady! In future you will not know her. I can condescend to people suffering from weakness of intellect and absence of will-power, as could any man who knows their every impulse as well as I: but people who offer me opposition—well, I break down that opposition. I have known even yourself to show signs of wishing to have a will of your own: and that is only laudable and only human. But do not forget that manifestations of the kind should always have reason behind them.

Liubov. [hotly] Oh, you think that no one in the world but yourself has any sense! Katenka, you do not like me, I know; yet do, for all that, take my part. I am unhappy! I am disgusted with the whole thing! Why did I ever leave my parents? Even if I had had Duniasha with me, things would have been better. Katenka, what is the matter?

Kat. Mat. Liubov Ivanovna, do not interrupt my train of thought. In me there is accomplishing itself a great revolution, and I am keenly conscious of its progress.

Liubov. Then do *you,* Alexei Pavlovitch, tell me whether, if you loved a woman, you would specially make it your business to annoy her?

Nikolai Dmitrievitch will inveigh against my parents, and how can he love me if he does that?

Tverd. Liubov Ivanovna, in love I am but a neophyte—even, I might say, an atheist.

Liubov. Are you, as usual, trying to be witty? Ah, but I cannot rise to that now. Why did I ever leave my home?

Vener. Unfriendly speeches are cheap! Now, enough! For the last time I ask you to try and make up your mind what you want, and give your desires verbal expression. It ought to prove quite a simple task for you. *I* can formulate things in clear and rational speech. Do you endeavour to do the same.

Liubov. That is what Katenka used to say—she used to say, "Cannot you give your feelings verbal expression?" But how am I to do that if *you* never do anything but talk about yourself? The very fact that you talk so much about yourself shows that you do not really love me. In fact, I do not believe that you have ever once given me a real thought. And if that is so, why do you run after me when your endless self-praise only wearies me? Even Papa understood me better than you do.

Vener. I tell you, not for the first time, that such speeches never reach me, and never will induce me to accept your invitation to the arena of sordid disputation. [He summons the factotum]

Have the horses put in. I am ready to pay a double fare.

Kat. Mat. [rising, and flinging back her hair] Ah, but allow me, allow me, now that my course of reflection is complete. [To Tverd.] Your and my rela—— [She is interrupted by commotion behind the scenes, and Iv. Mikh. vociferating, "Four fresh horses for this carriage!", and the manager replying, "Not a single horse is available," and Iv. Mikh. retorting, "Then every tooth in your rascally head shall be broken, for you've quite mistaken me, and shall be clapped in gaol!"]

Scene 7

[Enter Iv. Mikh.]

Iv. Mikh. Aha! Here they are! Here are my young friends! All caught at one swoop!

Tverd. [to himself] I seem to detect trouble in the offing. [Vener. seats himself exactly in front of Iv. Mikh., and stares him in the face]

Vener. And *I* seem to think that I may have to pull this gentleman's nose.

Kat. Mat. [her attitude unaltered] Ivan Mikhailovitch, I am very glad to see you. Yes, I am particularly glad.

Liubov. [running to her father] Papa! Papa! Darling Papa!

Petrusha. [rising, and looking sheepishly at his parent] Everyone knows (hic!) that the chief——

Iv. Mikh. [to Tverd., putting Liubov aside] My dear sir, will you kindly get out of this?

Tverd. When I accepted from you a salary of twenty roubles a month I did not *sell* myself to you, however much you may think so.

Iv. Mikh. It is not my impression. I understand that you undertook to instruct my son?

Tverd. [flushing] I did, but you are not going to frighten me with any bullying on your part—the reign of the bludgeon is past.

Iv. Mikh. Is it? Listen to the fellow! Now, if a man undertakes to act as a tutor, and then uses his task, first of all to turn his pupil's head, and then to abduct that pupil from his parents' house, what name should we give that man? Do you know the name? The name in question is "blackguard."

Tverd. You have insulted me, and I brook no insults.

Iv. Mikh. [advancing a step] Young fellow, if you had been a little older, and I not just a little sorry for you,——

Tverd. [retreating] Of course, of course! One couldn't expect anything else from a boor and a tooth-smasher.

Iv. Mikh. [becoming more threatening] Once already I have told you to get out of this, and——

Tverd. [catching up his travelling-bag, and making for the doorway] You are a contemptible retrograde!

Scene 8

Iv. Mikh. [approaching Petrusha] Now for you, young cockerel. Sashka! [Enter the footman] Is the birchrod handy?

Footman. It is, sir! it is in the carriage-locker.

Petrusha. Individuality—(hic!)—Indiv——

Iv. Mikh. [perceiving Petrusha to be half-tipsy] O-o-oh? What is *this?* [To the footman] See here. Take this young gentleman outside, and pour a bucketful of water over his head, and stow him away in the carriage until I come.

Petrusha. The tyranny (hic!) of parental authority over the individ——

Iv. Mikh. [taking him by the collar, twisting him about, and cuffing him across the back of the neck] Say the rest as you go along! Ma-a-arch! Sashka, put him into the well, soak him, and keep him safely in the carriage.

Petrusha. But why should I——

Iv. Mikh. Come, now!

Footman. Peter Ivanovitch, please accompany me. [Exeunt he and Petrusha]

Scene 9

Iv. Mikh. [to Kat. Mat.] And now for our lady of the shorn, yet emancipated, locks. May I first of all enquire why you think your uncle's household so very badly ordered? Is it really so faultily arranged?

Kat. Mat. Ivan Mikhailovitch, I have changed now. I now share your convictions.

Iv. Mikh. My dear, please drop all that sort of speech, and confess the truth; which is that you are a fool, and will always be one. Do you suppose that it was merely for my own pleasure that I have been administering for you your Lopukhovo property? And have I robbed you of aught? And have you ever paid me anything for your maintenance? Your yearly income from your property is 150 roubles: and of that sum I forbear to say what proportion you have ever handed to me.

Kat. Mat. You speak justly, though I scarcely consider my conduct to be the point most pressing.

Iv. Mikh. Whether it is, or whether it is not, what have I and Maria Vasilievna ever received from you save a contempt which now stands crowned with—well, with what? With an elopement—and with this letter! [He holds out to her her own letter] Well, from this day forth I am

no longer your kinsman, and you can go where you like, and take your quill-driver with you.

Kat. Mat. I have acknowledged what you say to be just: and as by doing so I have confessed my fault, I beg of you now to grant me your forgiveness. For I am but an unhappy woman.

Iv. Mikh. No, madam: you have now fooled me sufficiently, [glancing at Vener.] —yes, sufficiently.

Vener. Why look at *me* like that? To conceal from you that I have found your tirade in the last degree tedious would be sheerly futile. Why not return home, where things are quieter? In this place we are not all children, nor is there anyone for you to bully.

Iv. Mikh. Yes, sir, I *will* return home, but only when I have said my say.

Vener. And you cannot see that that too will be futile? Why, as I listen to you, I can forecast each word of yours, as well as foresee its total lack either of novelty or of intelligence.

Iv. Mikh. Nevertheless there are things which must be said—though, as regards some of them, not in the presence of your wife. If you consider it honourable to set a daughter against her father, I, who am of the passing age, at least know this much: that though a daughter who does not respect her father is worth but a groat, a wife who does not respect her husband is worth less still.

Vener. [to Kat. Mat.] Listen to this gentleman as he gives us lessons on points of honour. Listen to him! Is it not comical?

Kat. Mat. What he has said is but the truth. I shall be obliged if you will cease to address me. [She turns her back upon Vener.]

Vener. [to the factotum, with a shrug of his shoulders] Go and have the horses put in. [To Iv. Mikh.] You seem to me absurd—merely absurd.

Iv. Mikh [raising his voice] Perhaps so, but at least I have said a part of what I intended to say, and now can say the rest, and bid you go to the devil!—Liubov, I have brought Dunia-sha with me. Take her on your further journeying.—What has happened has been very painful to me—how painful you yourself, if ever you should have children, may one day come to realise. And now may God go with you! [He embraces her. She bursts into tears]

Vener. Not at all badly played, the comedy, but I am beginning to grow tired of it. [To Liubov] So shall we move into another room?

Liubov. No, no! I refuse! Papa, keep me with you. [To Vener.] I will not have you touch me!

Vener. [taking her by the hand] Let us leave Katerina Matveievna and your parent to have a cosy chat together.

Liubov. Oh, Papa, what have I done? I am afraid of this man! I hate him! [She buries her face in her father's breast]

Iv. Mikh. My child, you must be mad! Do, do think what you are saying! You must not, you really must not!

Kat. Mat. [stepping forward, and tossing back her hair with an air of determination] I will speak out now, and do you, Ivan Mikhailovitch, listen, and you also, Venerovsky. Liubov ought at once to leave that man, for he is nothing better than a worthless rogue.

Vener. [trying to outshout her] And *you* are an undeveloped, detestable, and absurd female! A word more, and I——!

Kat. Mat. Oh, you are not going to frighten me. I am a free agent, and do not intend to be cried down. You are a rogue, I repeat, and I am a woman who has advanced also to becoming an emancipated human being. [To Ivan Mikh.] If Liubov remains with this man he will first of all degrade her, and then cast her off, even as he did with myself. Only half an hour ago I was accounting myself above all my fellows. Now I stand before you a pitiful, contemptible, miserable creature.

Vener. No—just a fool—just that. And for the very reason that you are a fool does your conduct not surprise me. Liubov Ivanovna, I request, for the second time, your attendance.

Liubov. I will not! Nothing shall make me do so! Rather would I die!

Iv. Mikh. My poor girl, how came I to treat you so? Stay with me you shall. [To Vener.] I can now conclude what I have to say to you. The reason why you married my daughter was that you desired to gain a rich wife. Never from the first had you either love for her or respect. Your one object was to obtain money. And now, that money gotten, and, with it, a creature any one of whose finger-nails is worth more than all your body, you have made her miserable, and spat in the faces of people who never wished you anything but well. Thus the insignificance in you has allied itself with conceit. And I confess that I have been very largely to blame for the result.

Vener. [seizing hold of Liubov's hand, and shouting out the words] You are wrong! I had for my sole motive in the matter compassion for a girl whom I saw to be undergoing gradual contamination from your odious family, and a desire to rescue her from it. Liubov, come with me. No one shall make a fool of one who is accustomed to make a fool of others. Come with me, I say. [He tries to drag her to the doorway]

Liubov. You are hurting me, and I refuse to go with you, I refuse to be your wife! I hate you and detest you.

Iv. Mikh. [stepping forward] Let her go. Yes, let her go, or I will knock you down.

Vener. [whipping out a revolver, and stepping back] Do you suppose that I had not foreseen this? I foresaw it as soon as ever I came into contact with your family. From the first I saw that I might have to encounter insults and violence. Unfortunately, I and mine are people of action, and do not allow ourselves to be fooled. Now, touch me if you dare! [He raises the revolver and levels it]

Iv. Mikh. [approaching him with a nod, and taking his stand immediately in front of him] Very well.—Shoot, fool.—Come now, Liubov. [Exit with Liubov and Kat. Mat.]

Vener. [alone] So, after all, they have contrived to gain the laugh over me! Well, Bekletov was right when he said that principle must be set aside when dealing with such people. I have been too scrupulous with them.—However, I recognise that woman is free, and subject to no "rights" of any sort.—Why here are the gift deeds still upon me! [Enter the footman to look for a shawl which has been left behind] Here, take these papers, and give them to your master. [Exit the footman] How it will puzzle them to find that I have returned the documents! Ha, ha, ha!—No: social relations in that circle are still too gross and backward, too different from our own, for

compromise to be possible. I and mine have been born a hundred years before our time.

CURTAIN

DRAMATIC SCENES ABOUT THE PAN WHO BECAME A BEGGAR

DRAMATIC SCENES ABOUT THE PAN WHO BECAME A BEGGAR [1]

Translated by Mrs. H. M. Lucas

FIRST TABLEAU

[At the church door. Servants with litters are standing waiting for the Pan and his wife.]

First Scene

[1st, 2nd, and 3rd Servant]

1st. Servant. There, he took it into his head to go to church.

2nd Servant. It's time he did; I've been twenty years at court—and he hasn't been once.

3rd Servant. It must be he wants to repent.

1st Servant. And time, too. It's not a few tears that have flowed on his account. He beat Peter. He took away Simeon's wife, and Theodore's daughter. The people suffer, and implore him, but he, without heeding them, makes merry.

[1] History of the Tsar Agei, written at the end of 1886. [A Pan is a Polish Lord. Tr. and ed.]

From morning to night he drinks, lounges about, and goes hunting. He never gave a half-penny to a beggar, and does not let them come in. And only God puts up with his sins!

2nd Servant. You don't say that he is repenting! He's not that kind of man. Look, he's up to something in the church. [Thunder and lightning] What's that? Thunder from a clear sky.

Second Scene

[A courtier comes running out of the church]

Courtier. Oh, the Pan! What have they done? It's awful! [They surround the Courtier]

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Servant. What? What? Tell us all about it.

Courtier. Well then, listen. In the middle of the service he went into the church with his hat on, stood in the middle, and looked round. The Deacon came forth to read the Gospel. He came to the place where it is written: "Woe to you, rich men! Woe to you who are satisfied! Woe to you who laugh!" when the Pan shrieked out, "You lie! Give me the book!" He seized the book and began to tear it. Just as he had torn it to pieces, the thunder began to rattle. I ran out.

Third Scene

[The Pan comes out, followed by the people.]

The Pan. There you are, he reads out that the poor will be blessed and the rich become beggars. How could that be? How shall I become poor when I own a hundred villages, and all the country round under my power? What is written in the book is false, and falsehood should not be read. Then I tore out the pages, and will put them in my pocket. They shall not read any more. [Thunder and lightning] I'm not afraid. They are reading lies. And as I have lived as a rich man, so I shall go on living all my life. I shall not become a beggar. [To the people.] What is making you timid? You have been told to be off to the battue for the huntsmen. Be quick about it. I'm only going home to dine, I shall come at once. Mind you are all in the forest before me. [He gets into the litter, and is borne off. Clap of thunder]

The Pan. Thunder away, I am not afraid.

CURTAIN

SECOND TABLEAU

[A forest. Sound of horns.]

First Scene

[Two Huntsmen]

1st Huntsman. Didn't you see the Pan?

2nd Huntsman. I only saw him when he leapt from his horse.

1st Huntsman. How was it he let the horse go?

2nd Huntsman. He wounded it on horseback, the stag fell. That pleased him, he leapt down, and thought he had caught it. But the stag sprang off, farther and farther. He followed on foot. The horse ran away. We rushed to catch it. But it put up its tail, and was home again. Now he runs about on foot.

[Enter 3rd Huntsman]

3rd Huntsman. What are you doing here?

1st and 2nd Huntsmen. We are waiting for the Pan.

3rd Huntsman. You are looking for yesterday. He is already at home.

1st. Huntsman. What? And the horse?

3rd Huntsman. They caught it, and led it along. He mounted by the river.

2nd Huntsman. Are you lying?

3rd Huntsman. I saw him myself. I held the stirrup for him to mount. [Exeunt]

Second Scene

[The stag runs across, and stops behind a thicket. The Pan runs in, hatless, with a knife]

The Pan. Where is he? Where is he? He was here just now. Accursed Jews! They all remained behind, and let the horse go. Give me time, I shall return and thrash all of them.

[The stag appears, the Pan runs. Both disappear and appear again. The stag allows him to approach, and then is off again. (If possible, there should be water, which the stag swims across, with the Pan, without his clothes, after it).]

CURTAIN

THIRD TABLEAU

[Dark Wood]

First Scene

The Pan. [If there was a river, naked; if there was not, then in his clothes, torn to pieces, but without his gun, hunting horn, knife, or hat] Oh, people! You devils, rascals, demons! I'll flog you! Hulloa-oa! No, they don't answer. I'll get at you, you shall pay me for everything, sons

of devils! They've run off. They've left me alone. Wait a bit—Hulloa! [Listens] No one. [Sits down] Oh, yes, the stag. He brought me along! I shall have to stay the night here. Wait a bit, you devils. How I'll flog you, first one, then another. I'll settle you. Then I'll begin again. You won't forget. Hulloa! There's nobody. [Gets up] Anyhow, I must go. Perhaps you will come upon people in the fields. And here, wolves would eat you. Hulloa! My throat is dried up. Wait a bit, I'll pound your backs to a jelly. Hulloa! [Exit]

Second Scene

[Enter Robbers, with guns and sacks. They camp out, and light a fire]

1st Robber. People are afraid of us robbers, but now it is our turn that we are afraid of people. The Pan's accursed hunt has tormented us. They hid in the thicket. They frightened us.

2nd Robber. Yes, brother, for a whole day we have robbed no one, but ran away ourselves. To-morrow we must be on the road betimes. To earn some swag.

1st Robber. Living is well enough. Yes, there is one thing—it is not quiet.

2nd Young Robber. Why are you so frightened of the Pan?

1st Robber. Why are we frightened? What a fool you are! How should we not be frightened? This is not a case of a peasant and his hens, which we can get the better of straight away. The Pan now does not go out without a hundred men on horseback with muskets and knives following him, and two hundred men on foot with cudgels. He pounces on us, and there is nothing left of us but a damp spot.

2nd Robber. And you clear off so quickly.

1st Robber. Just so. Don't go to law with the rich, or fight with the strong. Even these forests are his, and all the villages around are his. A great man, his strength is great. A robber like us, only in a different style.

[Cries of the Pan behind the scenes: Hulloa, devils! I'll flog the lot of you! Hulloa!]

Third Scene

[The Robbers listen]

Young Robber. [Jumps up] A wood spirit! A wood spirit! He's crying out.

2nd Robber. That a wood spirit? Let's have a look to see what he's like.

[The Pan enters]

2nd Robber. There, what were you frightened of? He is not a wood spirit, but someone who has lost his way. No doubt drunk. Hi, you dandy!

The Pan. [Sees the people] That's what you are, robbers! You found a place, and made a fire. You abandoned your Pan. You just wait, I'll teach you! [Flies at them, begins to fight]

1st Robber. [Gets up, takes him by the collar] Ah, young fellow! That's the kind of soldier! Yes, easy now. [Takes him by the arms]

The Pan. You scamps, you idols, you devils! I'll give it you!

1st Robber. Why, boys, he's a madman. Just hand the strap.

The Pan. What are you, don't you know the Pan? I'll pull you out of your skin, and then hang you up by the legs.

1st Robber. [Fastening his hands behind] Now then, Sidenka, stretch it tighter. I'll give this Pan a couple of violent ones, so that he'll forget his Panship. [Takes the whip] See, the Pan, he says he is.

Young Robber. Well, he's like the Pan, anyhow.

The Pan. I shall hang you.

1st Robber. [Beats him with the whip] One! Now then, Pan, jump!

The Pan. Oh! Oh!

1st Robber. Now then, another good one. Will you flog like this, or do you want some more?

The Pan. Oh, oh! Truly I'm Pan. Oh, God!

1st Robber. Yes, I believe it. That's why I beat you. [Laughs] There, I'll take your clothes

off, then your Panship will be better seen. [Beats, and binds him to a tree]

CURTAIN

FOURTH TABLEAU

[Morning. The forest.]

First Scene

[The Pan, naked, is bound to a tree. He groans.]

The Pan. Oh, oh, oh! My hands have swollen. Oh! Just wait. I'll take vengeance on all. I will flog them with rods of iron. Oh, my back! They have broken me all to pieces. Well, you'll all pay for it. I'll give it you. Yes, I mean to get at you. Oh, oh! My mouth is dried up. I'll clap you in the cellars. I'm starving.

Second Scene

[Shepherds. An old and a young one.]

Young Shepherd. Gaffer, that man tied up is groaning. Why, look at him.

Old Shepherd. Look there, what a crime! No doubt the robbers plundered him and bound him.

The Pan. [Who has caught sight of them] What are you standing there for, you simpletons? Can't you see? Unbind me, quickly.

Old Shepherd. Ah, people have no fear of God. How they have tortured the man. [Goes near and wants to unbind him] What knots! Jack, give me your knife.

The Pan. What are you dawdling for? Quicker! Oh!

Old Shepherd. [Who has untied and cut the bonds] There you are, it's put right, my hearty. Would you like a drop of water? Jack, water and bread.

Young Shepherd. [Brings water and bread] There, my hearty, eat.

The Pan. [Sits down and groans] Oh, robbers! What things they do. Well, today you shan't escape my hands.

Young Shepherd. Gaffer, he is threatening somebody.

Old Shepherd. Don't worry. He's out of his senses, give him time to recover them. We must put something on him. [Takes off his old overcoat, to put on the Pan] At least you can put this on, you are ill.

The Pan. [Looks round, and pushes away the overcoat] What are you up to? Have you lost your senses? You are putting a sacking on me! Do you know who I am? I'm your Pan. Take off your undercoat at once, and your hat, brush

it properly, and put it on me. I'll put it on, as I may. Lead me to the Court, to my, to the Pan's, Court.

Old Shepherd. Evidently the man is out of his senses. He says he is the Pan, but I saw the Pan yesterday as he rode home on horseback. [To the Pan] That will do, that will do, put on what you are given, and betake yourself to the village. There you can lie down.

The Pan. [Jumps up] You are just like those were. Wait a bit, and something will happen to you. How do you dare to talk before the Pan with your hat on? [Pulls off his hat] Give me your undercoat. [Takes hold of it]

Old Shepherd. [Picks up his hat, pushes off the Pan, and goes on] Come along, Jack, he is quite out of his mind.

Young Shepherd. We unbound you from the tree, gave you food; gaffer gave you his greatcoat, and you still go on making a row. Stop it, I'll thrash you. [Takes up the whip and strikes him. The Pan falls. The shepherds go off. The Pan lies and groans]

Third Scene

Peasant. Look, there's a man on the ground!

The Pan. Hi, people, run as fast as you can to the Pan's court, and say that the Pan has been found. And that a carriage comes here for me

and the courtiers, but you let me have the cottage. I want to rest.

Old Man. What are you saying?

The Pan. What am I saying? I am your Pan.

Old Man. What Pan? The Pan lives at home in his palace, and does not run about barefoot.

The Pan. Idiot! I lost my way after a stag. I am the Pan. They are looking for me.

Old Man. You are lying; the Pan rode by yesterday, we saw him ourselves. Just now a clerk arrived from him. He is at home.

The Pan. You lie, robbers! I'll give it you!

Old Man. Wait a bit, young man. They say that the shepherds have already beaten you. What, haven't you had enough? Do you want some more? Stop it. Go your way.

The Pan. They don't believe. Ah, robbers! I'll get at you. Just listen, you won't believe that I'm the Pan? Well then, give me paper and ink, I will write a letter to the Pan's lady. She will recognise it. Because I shall write something that only she and I know.

Old Man. Enough of explanations; clear out!

First Peasant. What, gaffer, let him write. He can be taken to the village. [They lift up the Pan, and take him off]

CURTAIN

FIFTH TABLEAU

[In the peasant's cottage]

The Pan. I am tired out. It is so long since they went, it should be time for an answer. They do not hasten, they do not know. My wife will be glad. [Looks out of the window] There he comes!

[The messenger enters]

The Pan. What! Where is my carriage? Where are my people?

Old Man. Well, brother——

The Pan. What, what? How do you dare to talk like that?

Peasant. Yes, I dare that the Pan ordered you——

The Pan. What Pan?

Peasant. The real Pan, not one like you. The Pan ordered you to be beaten hence, that not a breath should be heard of you.

The Pan. My God, what is that? And what of my wife?

Peasant. Your wife, if you have one, I don't know what, but the Pan's lady said: "Are there such pretenders? Drive him away!"

The Pan. My God, my God! What will become of me? [Weeps]

Host. A strange business! What next, brother? Your trick has failed. God be with you!

CURTAIN

SIXTH TABLEAU

First Scene

[In the courtyard. The Pan, with a peasant woman, is sweeping up manure]

Woman. Look here, clumsy, don't you know how to hold a pitchfork? [Taking the pitchfork] I do it myself, like the Pan.

The Pan. I should be glad to, but I don't know how.

Woman. You know how to eat bread.

The Pan. Oh, what a life! It would be better to be dead.

Woman. Anyhow, drive it along. [He sets to, pushes, and falls]

Woman. You can't even do that. I'm annoyed with you.

Second Scene

The Pan. My pretty dear!

Woman. Ugh! You nasty fellow!

[The host enters]

Woman. Look at that idol, he doesn't work, and tries to do nasty things.

The Host. What! Will you make up to my wife? I'll show you! Get out! You're a nice kind of Pan.

CURTAIN

SEVENTH TABLEAU

[A village with a church]

First Scene

[The Pan enters, barefoot, with no hat, in a torn coat, and sits down at the edge of the road]

The Pan. Good that I've got some way, I shall reach home today. There they know me. But here, however much I told them I am the Pan, no one believes me. They only abuse me. And I've had nothing to eat. If I don't tell them anything, they give me something. If I tell them, I drive them away. I shan't begin to talk. [Goes to a cottage, and knocks] Give me some food! [The window opens]

Peasant Woman. What are you lounging about

there for! A strong fellow like you to beg —you can work.

The Pan. But I'm not a beggar, I'm the Pan.

Woman. If you are the Pan, there is no need to knock on the window! [Shuts the window]

Second Scene

[Two beggars, one blind, one without an arm, enter, and go up to the window]

The Beggars. For Christ's sake!

The Woman. [Opens the window, and gives them bread] Take it, for Christ's sake.

[The beggars sit down and eat]

The Pan. [Comes up to them] Give me something to eat.

The Blind One. Why don't you beg yourself?

The Pan. I begged—they gave me nothing.

The One-armed One. Well, here you are. [Gives him some bread; they eat] Who are you? Where do you come from?

The Pan. They won't let me tell them. When I say who I am, they all abuse me and beat me. They don't believe me. I don't know how to work, and I want to eat. Have pity on me, have me with you! I will reward you, so that you will be happy for ever.

The One-armed Beggar. What do you say, we'll take him! Let him carry the wallet.

The Blind Beggar. Let us go.

[The beggars get up, and go off with the Pan]

EIGHTH TABLEAU

[The Pan's Court. Servants in their best clothes. They are playing on the balalaika and dancing. From the gateway, enter the beggars and the Pan, singing verses about Lazarus]

The Porter. You are not allowed to come in, clear off!

Huntsman. I'll let loose the dogs. Pheu! Catch him!

[The dogs rush out. The Pan goes to the door]

Coachman. See, you're a smart fellow! The dogs will bite your legs. You'll know! Catch him!

The Pan. Oh, oh!

The Porter. [Takes him by the scruff of the neck, and drags him to the gate] Clear off! Get away while you can.

The Pan. I came . . . [Another Pan looks out of the window. The Pan becomes silent, and looks at him]

The Beggar Pan. Friends, I am at home. There is another of me at the window, what is that?

The Pan at Window. Let the beggars alone. Here's for them. [Throws down a handful of silver] Let the blind ones sing, and then feed them. Take the man in the fur coat into the dwelling house.

[The beggars sing]

CURTAIN

NINTH TABLEAU

[The Palace. The Pan, as a beggar, is dining alone, served by the Pan's servants]

The Pan. What does this mean? It was another of me at the window, serene and good. He protected me, and ordered them to take me here separately. My life is finished. No one recognises me any longer. Evidently, I shall perish in need. What is that?

[A light appears, and a voice from the light]

The Voice. Do not you know of the Pan Thaddeus, who was a powerful, rich, and proud Pan, how he did not believe the word of the Gospel, and said that a rich man could not be brought low?

Do you recognise now whose are the riches of this world, and how they should be used? Did you know that this was a vision, and why it appeared to you? Have you repented of your pride?

The Pan. I have repented, and will not live as I did before.

The Voice. Then you shall be Pan again, and deserve your own pride.

[The Pan's clothes are changed. His wife enters and embraces him, and the servants bow down before him]

TENTH TABLEAU

[A large, splendid table. The beggars sit at it, and the Pan and his wife serve them]

PETER THE PUBLICAN

PETER THE PUBLICAN[1]

Translated by Mrs. Lydia Turin

ACT I

[The action takes place in Syria during the third century]

Scene 1

[A square before a house. Seated in the square are two beggar women and three beggar men. From passers-by they ask for, and receive, alms. Enter a tramp]

Tramp. Hail, my friends!

First Beggar. Whence?

Tramp. From Cairo. How fareth your gathering of alms?

First Beggar. Ill. Rich folk are few.

Tramp. Few, sayest thou? Then what of the many rich houses here? [He points to a house opposite] In that house at least should there be a man with money!

[1] Written in June, 1894.

First Beggar Woman. Yea; money he hath. But also he is a man to choke before he will give unto the poor.

Second Beggar. All men know Peter the publican. Thirty years I have dwelt in this town without seeing him give away so much as a crust.

Third Beggar. And he hath a wife and a daughter like unto himself.

Second Beggar Woman. Not so. At least is the daughter kinder of heart. Their own servant hath told us so.

First B. W. Not a soul in the world resembleth Peter for meanness.

Tramp. Nay, that awaiteth still to be seen. If ye did go about so as to ask of him rightly, ye might yet obtain.

First B. M. Why not try thyself?

Tramp. I will, verily! Yea, and I will obtain. Rest ye assured of that. Never yet have I met him who could withstand me when I had begun upon him with my insisting.

A B. M. and a B. W. [together] Nay! Never wilt thou compass it. Nothing will he give thee.

Tramp. Will ye wager upon that?

First B. M. What now? [All come crowding around the tramp]

Tramp. Three pieces will ye wager?

First B. M. Behold them! Do thou produce thine own. [The two men laugh, strike hands upon

the wager, and hand the stakes to one of the beggar women]

Second B. M. Lo, even now he cometh! Peradventure it is that he is bearing bread unto the Prince?

Scene 2

[Enter Peter and a slave—the latter carrying a basketful of bread]

Tramp. [approaching Peter] For the sake of our Saviour Christ give alms unto an homeless pilgrim! Yea, have compassion upon me, O my father! Give, O doer of good deeds, for I am an-hungered. [Peter continues upon his way without looking at the tramp, who overtakes him, falls at his feet, and clutches at the hem of his robe]

Peter. Touch me not!

Tramp. My father!

Peter. Begone!

Tramp. Father beloved! [He pursues Peter, and again casts himself at his feet]

Peter. Let go, I tell thee, or I will slay thee! [He stoops as though to pick up a stone]

Tramp. Have mercy, O doer of good deeds!

Peter. Have I not warned thee? Now I will strike thee. Release me forthwith! [He snatches from the basket a loaf, hurls it at the tramp,

and departs. The tramp, catching up the loaf, runs back to the beggars with it]

Scene 3

Tramp. What said I, a moment agone? Here have I gained the wager! Here see you before you alms from Peter! [He holds up the loaf] Therefore give unto me the money.

Second B. M. Indeed art thou fortunate! But thou, who hast won, must now entertain all.

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene 1

[The interior of Peter's house. Peter's wife and daughter are seated in the foreground. Peter himself, stretched upon a bed at the back of the stage, is tossing frenziedly to and fro]

Peter. They are robbers! They have ruined me! Wherefore have they used so much flour? . . . Pay the money! . . . Cleave in twain! . . . The King! . . . See the colours sporting! . . . Farewell!

His Wife. This is the third night that he hath not mended, and I fear that he will die. [Enter an old woman]

Old Woman. How now, O wife? Art thou still weeping—art thou still thinking that soon thou wilt be burying thy husband? Nay! Have no fear. Death is not going to take him. He is not yet ready. Thirty years hath he been gathering money. Thirty years more will he be spending it. Then, but only then, he will be ready.

Peter's Wife. Talk not such foolishness! Art thou an-hungered?

Old Woman. Nay. Of food I have no need. [To Peter] Good sir, art thou sleeping? [Peter makes no reply] Scarce can they who have riches enter the kingdom of heaven, and never at all wilt *thou* reach it. Rather wilt thou be sent to be joined unto the sinners in Hell. [The daughter leaves the room]

Scene 2

[Enter a physician]

Peter. [springing up] What doest thou here? Dost thou intend to choke me?

Physician. Calm thyself. The sickness will pass. [Taking Peter's hand, he leads him back to the bed]

Old Woman. Fool! Fool! Thou art undoing all my work. No longer will I stay to behold thee. [Exit hurriedly]

Physician. [to Peter's wife] Hold thou him for me. [After sounding Peter, he continues as though to himself] Not here it is. Nay, it beginneth, rather, here, for I can hear it here, and therefore shall be able to remove it. The place of the sickness is as I say. Fear not. Thou wilt recover. Only lie in peace. [He produces a bottle, gives Peter to drink, and hands a bottle of lotion to Peter's wife] Anoint him each eventide. [He and the wife depart]

Scene 3

Peter. [sitting up after a silence] What is this? Surely it is death! Yea, I can feel that I am dying. And a moment agone the Angel of Death was here to fetch away my soul. Yet also he did say that I shall recover! If he was verily the Angel, how can I recover? My God, to think of what awaiteth me! Nay, but is it in very truth a right saying that never shall a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven? And is it in very truth a right saying that whatsoever I have done amiss shall be reckoned against me—my denyings of those who did ask, my failings in compassion for the widow and the orphan and the sick and the poor? Yea, is that indeed what shall be? Then why have I never before thought upon this?—Better had it been if I had bestowed one-half, or even all,

of my substance upon others than now stand condemned to depart unto devils! Even now are the devils before me! Even now can I feel them plucking at my soul! [He casts a look upwards] Yea, and I can see before me the scales which are to weigh both my good deeds and my bad! On the one side is there the money which I have taken from widows and orphans, and also the wages which I have retained, the wrongs which I have done, the revilings which I have uttered, the blows which I have struck. Yea, on that side do they so lie heaped that that side is descending, and the devils rejoicing amain! Ah, I am lost, lost! And the other side? But one loaf, but one loaf—but the loaf which I did cast at that poor beggar!—Yet behold, behold! Even now are the scales turning back, in that the one loaf hath outweighed all my offences!—Then that is what men signify when they speak of charity? Oh that I need not die now! Else should I know so well what it would behove me to do—that I should do all things in future according unto the Word of Christ, and give my all unto the poor, and keep nought whatsoever for myself. [Sinking back upon the bed, he falls asleep]

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene 1

[Peter is standing upon the verandah before his house, around which is a great multitude of beggars and others, and doling out to them alms from a bag]

First Beggar. [to Second] Yet again hast thou gone and taken thy share! [He pushes away the Second Beggar]

Second Beggar. Thou liar! Thou thyself hast once had alms already.

A Woman. Ye gods! I am being trampled upon!

A Voice from amongst the Crowd. Then thrust not so.

Third Beggar. Give also unto me, unto me, for I have five children, and each is younger than the last! [Many similar cries are heard]

Peter. Take. Yea, and take again, and if need be, I will get you more. Only strive not with one another. I alone have offended. For the sake of our Saviour Christ grant me for that your forgiveness.

Scene 2

[Enter Peter's wife in haste]

Wife. [to Peter] Thou rascal, thou! Art thou minded to make us also beggars? Once wert

thou mean. Now art thou charitable to excess. Thou rascal! [Snatching away the bag, she drives Peter within, upbraids and disperses the multitude, and, lastly, herself enters the house]

Scene 3

[Re-enter Peter, and with him, a slave named Elisar]

Peter. Wilt thou promise to do as I may bid thee?

Elisar. Yea. Bid me, and that same shall be done, for thou art dearer to me than father and mother, and the more so in that I do now perceive thee to have in thee the spirit of God.

Peter. Thou sayest that thou dost promise. Then add unto that also thine oath.

Elisar. I do promise, and I do add unto that mine oath.

Peter. Then listen unto me. My kinsfolk will not have me give away all my worldly substance, and I cannot use force against them. But also cannot I rest as now, for I have ever before mine eyes the greatness of my wrongdoing in the past, and would atone for it, and serve God. Hence, seeing that it hath been said "Do thou sell thine all, and give unto the poor," and I am hindered from sharing my wealth, nor am

free altogether to dispose of my worldly substance, I must, in place thereof, dispose of myself, and am resolved to dispose of myself, of mine own person, unto the people. Let us go, therefore, unto the slave market. Yea, do thou first bind my hands, and then lead me thither, and sell me for a slave, and, thereafter, give unto the poor the purchase money.

Elisar. My master, my master! This I cannot do!

Peter. But I have thy promise, and, added unto the same, thine oath?

Elisar. O my master, but mine oath was not for such a work as this! My heart yearneth for thee!

Peter. Yea, but yearned thy heart thus when I was doing deeds of evil, and imperilling my immortal soul? Art thou sorry because now I would fain save that soul?

Elisar. Be, then, thy will fulfilled.

Peter's Wife. [coming from the house] What now? Have done with this foolish speech! Enter within! [Exeunt all]

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Scene 1

[The slave market. An owner is offering two chain-bound slave girls. Another one is offering an aged male slave and the slave's youthful son. Enter Peter, Elisar, and some slave buyers]

First S. B. [pointing to one of the slave girls] How much for this one?

First Owner. Two hundred grivni.

First S. B. What can she do?

First Owner. She can both sing and dance.

First S. B. And cook?

First Owner. Nay: but unto that end thou canst buy this my elder one.

First S. B. Of neither have I need.

Second S. B. [approaching the two male slaves] How much for these twain together?

Second Owner. One hundred and thirty grivni.

Second S. B. Is there any man like to give *that?* [He fingers the elder slave's arm] No strength at all hath he in him, and the son is too young.

Second Owner. Howbeit, I will take no less for the twain.

Second S. B. Thou shalt not need to do so—thou shalt not need. [He approaches Peter] This one: for what labour is he meet?

Elisar. [to Peter, in a whisper] Ah, my master! Do this thing I cannot, do this thing I cannot! Absolve thou me of my promise.

Peter. [also in a whisper] Nay, but remember thine oath as well. Let me not go amiss. [To the slave buyer] All manner of labour can I perform, even unto writing and reckoning.

Second S. B. And the price of thee?

Peter. [to Elisar] Do thou answer for me, "One hundred grivni."

Elisar. [to the slave buyer] One hundred grivni.

Scene 3

[Enter two Egyptians]

First Egyptian. [to the slave buyer] Wherefore wouldest thou buy that slave?

Second S. B. Because I have need of a labourer. Yet, inasmuch as this man can write and reckon, I fear lest he come to be of little avail for tasks of heaviness.

First Egyptian. Verily, then, is he of the sort whereof I myself have need, for I am a dealer in precious stones, and seek cleanliness and honesty and prudence more than the strength of a heavy hand.

Peter. Then take me, O my master. I shall please thee. Verily will I serve thee as I would mine own father.

First Egyptian. True enough, thou dost please me. [To Elisar] And the price of him?

Elisar. The price is one hundred grivni.

First Egyptian. Then I will give it thee.

Elisar. [bursting into tears] Oh, but I cannot! . . .

Peter. [embracing Elisar] Fare thee well! Dispose of the money according unto my bidding.

Elisar. Fear not. All shall be done as thou didst will. And farewell, farewell, O my beloved master!

Peter. Let henceforth there be silence upon this. [Exit with the Egyptian, and Elisar remains weeping alone]

CURTAIN

ACT V

Scene 1

[A house in Egypt. A dumb janitor is seen admitting the physician already presented, and, with him, a merchant. The janitor then informs them by signs that his master will attend them]

Physician. [to the merchant] That man would signify, I conceive, that his master is within, and hath consented to receive us. So let us enter.

Merchant. Yea, for I know that the people herein are hospitable. [Enter one of the Egyptians seen in the last Act]

Scene 2

Egyptian. I rejoice to behold you, and pray would have you enter. Weary indeed after your journey must you be. I beseech you to accept of me some refreshment.

Merchant. I thank thee! This my friend is a physician from distant Syria, whilst I myself, as one visiting this city on business, could not but do myself the favour of visiting you.

Egyptian. Then pray be seated. [He claps his hands, and calls aloud: "Methodius!"]

Scene 3

[Enter Peter garbed as a slave. On perceiving the physician, he averts his face]

Peter. What needeth my master?

Egyptian. Bread, grapes, and wine for the refreshment of these his honoured guests. They are from thine own country. Knowest thou them?

Peter. Nay, I know them not. [Exit]

Physician. [to the Egyptian] Hast thou ever visited my city?

Egyptian. Yea—eight years past, when I did buy the slave even now beheld.

Physician. Then the time must have been the same as when a strange thing did happen there—a mystery which never to this day hath been revealed.

Egyptian. And that mystery?

Physician. That one of our wealthiest citizens, a man known as Peter the publican, one possessed of lands and gardens, but also the meanest in all the country, did suddenly turn unto the Christian faith, and divide amongst the poor such of his goods as he was able, and, inasmuch as (thus it was said) he could not wholly divide them, did sell himself into slavery, and cause the price of the selling to be given unto the needy. And never since then hath he been seen.

Merchant. No, nor although to this day his wife sendeth out messengers to find him. No man knoweth whither he went, nor unto what he came.

Egyptian. Truly a marvellous thing! Of what age was he, and of what appearance? [Enter Peter, carrying a jug of wine, and some fruit]

Physician. Of about fifty, and of moderate stature, and slender, so as in some measure to be like unto this slave here. [Peter, covering his face with his hands, runs from the room]

Egyptian. Nor is this slave of mine a slave, and no more. Also he is pure gold. From the day when he did come hither have my affairs prospered. Many times I have offered him his

freedom, but always he hath refused it, in that, though but a bondsman, he is one of the most virtuous men known unto me. Methodius, come hither! [Re-enter Peter]

Physician. [to the merchant] In truth, see how he resembleth Peter the publican! [Peter turns, and rushes away towards the entrance-gate]

Peter. [to the janitor] Open thou quickly, dumb one! [He disappears without]

Janitor. [entering to his master] Of a certainty that slave must be a saint, for, as he passed through the gate, I beheld a ring of light descend, and rest upon his head!

Egyptian. And there is also the miracle of this dumb man speaking!

Physician and *Merchant.* [together] Then he it was, then he it was! Rather than that men should praise him hath he gone!

CURTAIN

A CONVERSATION

A CONVERSATION [1]

Translated by Mrs. H. M. Lucas

NICOLAI NICOLAEVICH had been summoned to his neighbour's. Apparently Ivan P. B., the neighbour, who considered N. N. an intelligent and learned man, was on this occasion specially anxious for a visit from my principal because he wished him to meet a professor of history from Moscow. He entreated him not to refuse. After the manner of nonentities, I. P. took pleasure in listening to the talk of intelligent people though he did not understand it. We drove over. The learned professor was seated at lunch next to N. N., and it was evident that the host and hostess were bringing them together. N. N. with his usual good nature, though he saw better than anyone else the ridiculous side of this "playing to the gallery," as he called it, was ready to enter into an argument so as not to disappoint his host. He tried to draw the professor, especially near lunch time he talked perpetually. The other, however, remained silent, as it seemed to me because he suspected some-

[1] Written, according to certain indications, about the middle of the seventies.

thing. The professor was one of those young, learned men who say, "One can't do anything about it," "an intelligent fellow," "I manage to live," "but *honestly*," and similar phrases.

His expression, however, was intelligent, resolute, and quick. He evidently felt himself *ferré à glace,* especially in his own subject. After lunch an argument began about history and the law of progress.

N. N. said that the law of progress, the only clue to history, is quite unproven and more than doubtful.

"How about the law of progress," he repeated several times, "for universal history, when nine-tenths of the human race, China, Asia, Africa, go by the opposite law?"

The professor answered that the law of progress is obvious in all historical people, and that science has no concern with the others.

N. N. broke off dumbfoundered.

"So you don't even want to know about them?"

Professor: "They don't come into the domain of science!"

N. N. became silent.

As we drove home, N. N.'s dear "esprit de l'escalier" (as he called his judgments on the day's impressions) was specially lively. I remembered and noted down this "staircase wit" because its expression seemed to me remarkable.

"'Not belong to science'—not in the sphere of science," he repeated the words of the professor. "You heard our argument?"

"Yes, part of it."

"Now notice the amusing point," he said to me with his gentle, intelligent smile. "The amusing point is that in history the only interest is its philosophic meaning. That is to say, the law according to which mankind lives, which is found in history. What does it matter to me whom Hannibal conquered and what Louis XIV's mistresses were like? What interests me is the law, i.e., what is to be deduced from all this. Now he says the law of progress. And when I wish to verify this law, he says, 'Verify it only by our science based on this very law.' That is, I say that there are not 40 yards in this acre, and he says, 'Don't take your own yards but mine for a measure—exactly 40 yards. I measured it myself.' Before asking whether science is any use, they say, Trust science, learn it, just like missionaries in religion. Learn it, work at it, consecrate ten years to it, grow bald over it—and then you won't come to your senses. Really you won't have come to your senses because you will be sorry for all the labour and years you have wasted. He already can't agree with me. He would have to renounce ten years' work. Heaven help him!

"The chief point, however, is that this method of reception, not contradicting, but putting aside the argument, was invented quite lately in all sciences, and is very clever. The chief interest lies in its philosophical significance, i.e., I want to know what truths history proves, what follows from the fact of the

Punic and such and such wars and such and such laws. I want to know what follows from the fact that the nerve has reflex action, and that sugar is formed in the liver, and the theory of the criminal law, and so forth.

"I ask, 'Is the human race becoming more perfect, or not? Is the soul immortal? Is the death penalty just?' and so on. They reply, 'Vous êtes hors de la question; cela n'est pas du domaine de la Science.' It is like a public meeting of a Society when the subject under discussion has been where to have lunch, and a careless member asks the awkward question as to what the Society has done. 'You are off the point.' 'You are outside the domain of science.' Formerly each science did not set aside all philosophic questions connected with itself, now history says outright that questions as to the destiny of the human race, the laws of its development, are outside the domain of science. Physiology says that it knows about the work of the nerves, but that questions as to whether man is free or not are outside its province. Jurisprudence says that it knows the history of the origin of such and such enactments, but that questions as to the measure in which these enactments correspond to our ideal of justice are outside its sphere, and so on. Worse still, medicine says, 'This illness of yours is outside the domain of science.' What the devil do your sciences matter to me? I had better play chess. Their only justification is that they should answer my questions. But you learn for the pure love of learn-

ing, though you know that you will not arrive at anything."

"Well, how would you have it?" I asked.

"Just as it is. No one is to blame. This is the weakness of scientific knowledge. The prohibition on man's tasting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is an immutable human property. Only that is the way it should be spoken of. There is no need to be proud of it. What is there for me to be proud of in the fact that I know down to the smallest detail the meaning of each hieroglyphic, and yet am not strong enough to understand the hieroglyphic inscription?"

"They hope to understand it," I said.

"Hope, indeed! It is time they understood that this hope has lived through three thousand years of history, and we have not moved a hair's breadth forward towards the knowledge of the nature of justice, or freedom, or the meaning of human life! Chess playing is a pleasant occupation, but nothing to be proud of, and still less a reason for despising those who don't play chess."

A CONVERSATION

A CONVERSATION[1]

Translated by Mrs. H. M. Lucas

(About the Land)

THE conversation had begun even before lunch. It had begun by Maria Vasilievna Krasnopevesova—a widow who was mistress of the house and guardian of her young children—telling the friend who was lunching with her how people stole wood from the forests on her children's property. The friend was the marshal of nobility in the district, Herzenstein, a true Russian as Herzenstein himself considered.

"They drove up, and cut down seven small oak trees, just as if the forest belonged to them, and carried them off. I can't overlook it, otherwise they will all come and there will be nothing left. I have no right to allow it."

"No, but all the same it is cruel and first of all completely unnecessary as in consequence of this to tear away from their work breadwinners and fathers of families, and put them in prison."

"What then do you advise me to do, to thank them?"

[1] A variant of the story "There are no guilty people in the world." Written in June, 1910.

This ironic retort was directed at Simeon Terentyevich Prokoviev, the tutor of Maria Vasilievna's children, who, though in her opinion he did not know how to behave "in a decent house," and had various queer ideas, was yet a good, useful unassuming fellow and an excellent tutor, who made the children love their lessons and learn them to such purpose that the two elder ones had passed very well into the third and fourth classes of the gymnasium.

Simeon Terentyevich was silent, and only sighed. He knew perfectly that it was useless to argue with the decision of M. V.'s opinions, and her complete indifference to the proofs of those she talked with. He was silent, and bent his head over his plate of stewed fruit. They were in the middle of the last course.

"Something has happened to the people these last few years," the marshal Herzenstein replied, in answer to Maria Vasilievna's retort. "The last principles of restraining morality have become extinct. The understanding of the right of property is completely dying away among the people. There is already no difference between *meum* and *tuum*. There is a frightful falling off both in religion and morals."

"But here's Simeon Terentyevich wanting their heads stroked."

Simeon Terentyevich, silent, bent lower over his plate, and choked himself with the core of an apple swallowed almost whole.

"I don't want anything," he growled.

"I can't hear what you say."

"I am not saying anything."

"And Simeon Terentyevich does not talk about moujiks, for him they are saints," said M. V.

"Yes, and if there were prisons for these saints and gallows too, saving your presence, we should not be talking here," said the true blue Russian. "They are now thorough paced thieves."

Simeon Terentyevich went red and then pale, and said with a shaky voice and an unnatural smile, " 'Thorough paced thieves' is a good expression, but you are not using it in its true meaning."

"That is, what exactly do you mean?" said the true blue Russian.

"Oh, nothing. Merely that the thieves are those who took other people's property and use it. When those whose property has been taken from them take it back from the robbers, I do not think they can be called thieves."

"Well, I never——"

The manservant, Taras, offered the marshal, who had finished, a second helping of stewed fruit. The marshal refused angrily because he wished to confute this ill-mannered tutor fellow who was evidently hinting at something rude. Maria Vasilievna got up, and said with a smile,

"Better go on talking in the drawing room. The coffee will be there."

"Excellent," said the marshal with a smile at his hostess. Then getting up with a wide movement, as

becomes a true Russian, he crossed himself before the ikon. "You there, wait a bit! I'll show you how to fling such words about!" thought he meanwhile, a propos of the rudeness of all these young puppies.

"Then how might you be pleased to define thieving in the new style?" he turned to S. T.

"Not in the new style, but according to the most ancient common sense," said he hotly. "There is no need to beat about the bush. You know whom I meant when I said that the thieves were those who took other people's property and owned it. I mean all landed proprietors."

"Why does he who owns land take and destroy the rights of another?"

"Landed property is held like every other form of property, by labour. One man works and holds it —the only difference is that it is possible to own pearls or brilliants or gold and not infringe the rights of others. If we were on an island where everybody lives off the land, if a man takes for himself what would support another, he deprives the other of it. He makes the other man a beggar, or his slave."

"But then, we are not on an island."

"It's all the same, the surface of the earth is limited."

"Yes, but how would you divide the land fairly?" Maria Vasilievna broke into the conversation. "How many lumps of sugar for you?" she asked meanwhile, as Taras put the coffee tray on the table.

"It is neither possible nor necessary to divide it, just as the air can't be divided. It is necessary to all alike," said S. T.

"But how could it not be divided?"

"In the way understood by these same 'thieves,' the people, by recognising that the land is God's, common, and by making use of it only with the common consent."

"Yes, this is the dear 'Mir' (village community) with its strips a yard and a half wide.[1]) This is like your reading, lofty conceptions, and they have brought the peasants to—no, I won't say to what—to what they are now. It is not the Mir that made them beggars, but the land owners and the government."

"If it had not been for the government they would have come to grief altogether. The government this time has understood what was to be done, thank the Lord. The law of the 9th November may put things right yet. A strong landowning class is the first and only condition of order and prosperity."

"Yes, a fine prosperity, which is founded on illegal separate personal property in land."

"It exists all over Europe, and thanks to it there is order and prosperity throughout Europe."

S. T. began to lose his temper, and said quickly:

"That is what is so horrible. Europe . . . ! Our government, forgive me, is made up of such stupid, out-of-date people that they do not understand, can-

[1] Lit. two arshin strips. The arshin is 28 inches.

not think with their own minds, and govern according to the conditions of their own lives. Europe! But in Europe there has never existed what then was, and still is, with us—common ownership, common ownership in land."

"A fine common ownership, indeed, a good friend to the public house. That was all common ownership meant."

"Permit me to tell you that among the Russian people there lived, and still lives, a consciousness that the land cannot be an object of private property, and this consciousness in which it had got ahead of Europe, a consciousness which Europe must acquire sooner or later—it is beginning somewhere or other in England now, and this advanced consciousness of the Russian people we consider backwardness, and take example from Europe, which has lost all sense of justice."

"Yes, what a good thing it would be, if we were even a little like Europe. The chief point is that all you say is mere general phrases. I ask you, how to organise property in land. The strong ne se laissent pas payer par les grands mots. Action is necessary. And of this there is nothing, nothing at all. This is for you and other people with pretty fancies like yourself, and there is no answer."

"On the contrary, there is a very simple, clear, and definite one."

"It would be interesting to hear it."

"The answer is that the land ought to be held in common."

"Yes, we have heard all that. But how is it to be done? When one set of people want to work at the land, and another one playing the fiddle?"

"By arranging so that the man who has use of the land pays the man who plays the fiddle for the superiority which he enjoys over him who does not have use of it."

"Yes, but how?"

"By paying him."

"How much? It is odd that all this seems easy to you."

"How much? As much as the fiddle player has to pay in taxes for the social purposes of the government."

"This is Henry George. The Single Tax."

"Yes, Henry George and the Single Tax."

"But this is quite impracticable."

"Why? The liberation of the slaves among us seemed impracticable, the abolition of serfdom. This seemed far more impracticable than liberation from territorial slavery. But people said just the same things then. The whole thing lies in recognising private property in land as a crime. You and M. V. talk of thieves, but the thieves are all the landed proprietors. There was a time when the people, as slaves, did not feel all the injustice of their slavery, and bore it patiently. A time came when it

was impossible to bear it any longer. The better people among the slave owners felt this, and the slaves understood too, and it would only have been possible to hold them down by force—and you don't hold down anything long by force. It is the same now with territorial slavery. Just in the same way, the best people——"

"Those like yourself——"

"The best people among the territorial slave owners understand that this can't go on, and recognise that they are sinners."

"You and I, M. V., are sinners."

"Yes, sinners. And the chief point is that the people knows that it is being deceived, and knows that the landowners are sinners and thieves. And in such a time you can think of nothing cleverer than the immoral law of the 9th November which corrupts the people—and you dream that so we should walk behind Europe, though in fact, as far as the people's consciousness goes, we are a thousand miles ahead of Europe. Yes, this is possible."

"Yes, but all the same, I don't see what is to be done!"

"Value the land, and fix all dues and taxes on the land."

"Henry George. But the population of the towns?"

"The town population will not pay taxes. But that does not matter. I even do not know how to

bring into being the liberation of the slaves of the land, just as they did not know how to bring about the liberation of the Negro, or the serfs in Russia; but I know that it is impossible to go on living in this crying injustice. And we should not hide from ourselves, but, on the contrary, feel that the fact that fifteen oak trees have been carried off from M. V. is not stealing, but is an indication that the owning by M. V. or her children of the land on which the oak trees grew is illegal and criminal, and that if there is a question of stealing. . . ."

"Yes, thank you for making me out a thief," M. V. broke in. "You, it seems, have already contradicted yourself, S. T."

"M. V., this really is not a joke," said S. T., who had already quite lost his temper. "Only think. They, the peasants, know, as well as they know that the sun rises each morning, that the land is God's, and they know, not by reflexion, but in their own bones, that they cannot live without the land, and that only by working all their life on the land and making a bare livelihood can they bring up children, just such people as yours. And suddenly they understand quite plainly that the land is taken from them by people who don't work."

"You have strange thoughts," began M. V., and she began a long story about her duties to her children and about bad guardians, and about what the children of Prince Alashev were like, and how the

Prince had married a sister of the well-known Strogonov. And how there was a story about him and Yumnova.

S. T. said nothing, then got up and went out in silence.

"You know, I would not keep a gentleman of that type with *my* children."

"I think so myself. Find me another."

"What porridge in the brain!"

The same evening the servant, Taras, who had the habit of writing his notes, wrote in them the following description of the day:

"Marshal came. Lunched late. Waited for the children. My mistress scolded me on the children's account. But how can I speak out? S. T. spoke well with the marshal, and so turned the whole matter inside out that the marshal was all over the place. You can't hide the truth. Yes, our brother the peasant lives in a great deception. My brother's fiancée came."

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THE END

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